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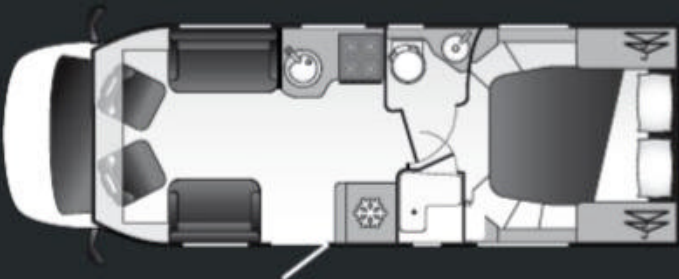




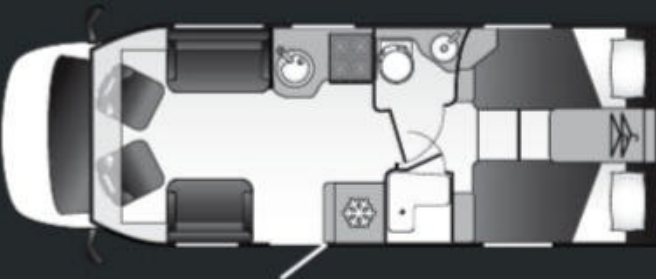
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WELCOME



Sarah Wakely
Editor-in-chief

There's a lot to learn about motorhomes – even after working on this magazine for 17 years, I'm always finding out something new and helpful about our brilliant pastime.

Which is why we put together our Q&A special in this issue. Over the past month, we asked you for your pressing motorhome questions on social media, then passed them on to our experts for their advice – from whiffy toilets to choosing the correct tyres, all of their must-read replies can be found starting on p23!

Also this month, we've launched the voting for our *Top 100 Sites Guide 2024*. If you've been to a campsite that you think deserves a spot in next year's edition, do let us know, by going to www.practicalmotorhome.com/vote – tell us why you like it, and it could be in with a chance of starring in the next guide! This year, voting is online only, so make sure to visit our website and have your say.

sarah.wakely@futurenet.com



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Beddgelert, Snowdonia



what3words

///most.quirky.alpha

Why tour here?

Packed with delightful stone cottages and mouthwatering views, Beddgelert is the quintessential Welsh mountain village.

With Snowdon a few miles north, you'll find there are countless options for walking and cycling adventures. The stunning valley of Nant Gwynant is also well worth exploring. But it's the bubbling, heaving river of Glaslyn, and the gorge of the same name, that are among the biggest attractions here.

Don't miss...

There's a beautiful walk along the Glaslyn river, which leads to Gelert's grave, legendary resting place of the faithful hound of the medieval Welsh Prince Llywelyn the Great. The dog's grisly demise is retold on the tombstone. Read more about touring Wales in Susan Taylor's report on p40.

 [practicalmotorhomeuk](https://www.instagram.com/practicalmotorhomeuk)

Getty/RA Kearnson

CONNECT

letter of the month

I was interested to see a great article in the June 2023 magazine (issue 271) about windsurfing at Rutland Water. I am a keen watersports enthusiast and a senior RYA Instructor.

Reading the article, I was particularly concerned that, as a self-described beginner, the author was not wearing any personal flotation device (buoyancy aid or life jacket) in any of the pictures, and this was not mentioned in the article. This is recommended by the RYA and required by most centres. Every year there are injuries and rescues needed of people who are not prepared for the sport, particularly if they were to become separated from their board.

Every sailing course starts with buoyancy (personal and craft). This saves lives and readers need to be aware of this.

Buoyancy aids and life jackets are different, and those heading out should understand the difference. Buoyancy aids provide flotation to support, and life



jackets will turn the wearer over in the water and hold their head up if unconscious (this can easily be researched in more depth). Both should be the correct size and weight rating for the user.

To anyone reading this: please use a personal flotation device when windsurfing, sailing or paddleboarding, and get out there and enjoy the water.

Chris Bridge

SW Park of the Year is named



Long Hazel Park in Somerset has been named Camping and Caravanning Park of the Year at the South West Tourism Awards. The five-star, adults-only park – which has touring accommodation for motorhomes, caravans and tents – is open all year and has been run by the Walton family for 26 years.

Pamela and Christina Walton (pictured) attended the awards ceremony at the Eden Project in March, where they received the Gold Award for the Camping and Caravanning Park of the Year. Sponsors Anytime Booking presented the pair with a stunning trophy.

Judges commended the park for the owners' "commitment to providing the best possible welcome for all of their guests. Their passion for making facilities accessible is clearly evident, as is their desire to be as eco-friendly as possible."

Point of view

Can you name this northern landmark?
It's just for fun
– the answer
is below...



ANSWER: Hexham Abbey, Northumberland

MILENCO



The writer of our Letter of the Month wins a pair of Milenco Quattro Levelling Ramps worth £40. They're twice as high as many plastic levels, with a high-grip leading edge, and can be mounted back-to-back for levelling tag-axles. Visit www.milenco.com for details and retailers.

you also said...

■ An addendum to some of the travel safety advice given in *Practical Motorhome* (issue 270) is, when visiting any city or place with lots of people, always put a £20/€20 or larger bank note in your shoe. You never know when you might need it to get back to the 'van!
David Waters





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Making connections



The Caravan and Motorhome Club's aim to offer free Wi-Fi across its campsites is moving at pace. The Club has invested around £1.5 million into upgrading connectivity across its network, and from April will begin to roll out a programme of campsite-wide upgrades that will take around eight months to complete.

Ultimately, the aim is to deliver free Wi-Fi to pitches so that users can check emails, post to social media and search and browse the web. There are also plans to offer a paid-for upgrade option for those sites wishing to enable people to download files and watch videos.

The completion of phase two will see delivery of Wi-Fi across sites in a few months' time. The Club says that it will be contacting members who have an annual or weekly Wi-Fi pass (supplied by Freshwave) regarding any outstanding value left on their purchase.

Love Touring Festival comes to Edinburgh

The Love Touring Festival is coming to the Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh, for the weekend of 28-30 July 2023, when it will be showcasing the latest motorhomes, caravans, holiday homes, accessories and specialist outdoor gear.

Visitors can enjoy a wide range of entertainment, street food and a huge choice of accessories.

Advance tickets cost £14 for adults (under-16s free). A four-night stay costs £140 with hook-up (£100 without) and includes entry to the show and a free shuttle bus to the city centre. Find out more at lovetouringfestival.com.



Summer in Shrewsbury



The organisers of this summer's VanLife Festival say they are on course to deliver one of the biggest events on Shrewsbury's West Mid Showground. Damien Jones (*pictured above right, with Salop Leisure's Ed Glover*) and Terry Smith, who founded and run the festival, say 1300 vans have booked for the event on 2-4 June, and that they expect the remaining 500 spaces to sell quickly.

Sponsored by Salop Leisure, the festival welcomes all makes and models, from micro-campers to adventure trucks and everything in between. The event also includes display vehicles, workshops, travel talks, live music, street food, bars, accessory suppliers and more.

A four-day weekend pass including vehicle camping costs £78. For tickets, go to thevanlifefestival.co.uk.

Secret 7

Road trips in Europe

Do you stick to a well-driven path, or do you prefer to follow a road less travelled? If it's the latter, you'll enjoy these lesser-known road trips, picked out by online vehicle marketplace cinch.co.uk.

1 Salzkammergut, Austria

If you want to get away from the hustle and bustle, head for tranquil Salzkammergut. This wilderness has fabulously glassy waters for swimming, fishing and boating opportunities. Visit the picturesque village of Hallstatt for dramatic scenery as you drive through lush valleys.

Stay at appesbach.at/en

2 Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa, North Macedonia

Straddling the border between North Macedonia and Albania, Lake Ohrid is one of the world's oldest, deepest lakes, with idyllic views, and it's clear to see why it has

UNESCO World Heritage status. Here, you can explore the city of Ohrid and cruise through the verdant Galičica National Park.

Stay at campingrino.wordpress.com

3 Covadonga, Asturias, Northern Spain

With crystal-clear waters, superb beaches, hiking trails and great cuisine, the northern region of Asturias has it all. To add a little culture, drive to the major religious site of Covadonga, in the Picos de Europa mountains.

Stay at camping-covadonga.com

4 Salento and Valle d'Itria, Italy

Drive to the heel of Italy's boot to Salento in Puglia, a remote area where roads wind through olive groves. Explore the villages of Alberobello and Locorotondo, dotted with cone-roofed houses known as *trulli*.

Stay at torrerinalda.it

5 Brno wine region, Czech Republic

Work your way from Bratislava, Slovakia, to the Czech Republic, to explore vineyards and fine châteaux. Regular pit-stops will allow your passengers to try the region's wines.

Stay at campinghana.com



Getty

6 The Troll Path, Norway

Western Norway's Troll Path (Trollstigen) is a long stretch of road zigzagging across the Geirangerfjord region (*above*). Tackle hairpin bends and steep inclines, and don't miss the mighty Stigfossen waterfall.

Stay at geirangercamping.no

7 Velika Planina, Slovenia

An hour's drive from Ljubljana, Velika Planina, in the Slovenian Kamnik Alps, is a peaceful plateau dotted with cows and shepherd huts. To enjoy views of the valley below, you'll have to park your motorhome and hop on the cable car.

Stay at kampresnik.com

The best of your touring photos



1 Looking back to our 2015 trip to Morocco. We made a lunch stop, between Imi-n-Ifri and Kasbah Amridil, over the Tizi-n-Outfi pass in the High Atlas Mountains. We had stopped after getting stuck behind a rather ancient lorry being driven at walking pace!

David and Judy Gittings

2 Here's my contender for Hotshots (or should I say Coldshots?)! My wife and I and our four dogs were at a stopover near Crufts Dog Show at the NEC in early March. We quickly got to grips with the heater controls and had a very cosy time, despite the sub-zero temperatures outside.

Carl Stretton

3 A very chilly start for our motorhome, Muriel, in the snowy depths of North Yorkshire.

Alex Morton

Email your pictures and their stories (40 words, plus name, address and contacts) to **hotshots@practicalmotorhome.com**. The best photo will win these guides: *All the Aires Spain and Portugal*; *All the Aires France (North and South)*; *All the Aires Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands*; *Go Motorhoming and Campervanning*; *Sea View Camping Scotland*; *Sea View Camping Wales*; *Sea View Camping West Country*; *Road Trip Europe – The Great War and More*; and *Road Trip Europe – Go Dutch*. All are from Vicarious Books, www.vicarious-shop.com, 0131 208 3333.



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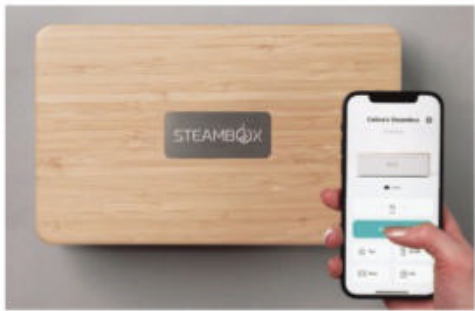
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Folding trolley

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Ultra-Sil daysack

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Price £32 **Web** seatosummit.co.uk



Goal Zero Nomad 5 solar panel

This affordable and lightweight solar panel has a built-in kickstand and features a 5W panel for charging phones, head torches and cameras.
Price £54.99 **Web** trekitt.co.uk

PICK OF THE MONTH



Avtex W215TS 21.5” 12V/24V/240V Smart TV

These days, most of us have a domestic TV that’s capable of all kinds of digital functions – but what about the set in your motorhome? Avtex is a big name in leisure vehicle electronics, and it produces a range of super-slim Smart TVs that can be powered by 12V – ideal for using in your ’van. Simply connect the TV to the internet and you’ll be able to watch content including Netflix, Amazon Prime and more (subscription is required), as well as iPlayer and YouTube. You can also wirelessly cast from your phone. Various sizes are available; the 21.5-inch model featured here weighs 3.1kg.
Price £399 **Web** towsure.com

A STICKER SITUATION



The Leach family have acquired a memorable collection of souvenir stickers on their European Odyssey (see p58 for this month's column)! Turn the page to discover some of their favourites...



MARCUS'S HIGHLIGHTS...

Samobor, Croatia

"If Dorothy hadn't had an unlucky fall and broken her arm, we would never have visited Samobor. As it was, we had a week to wait before her check-up, after which we planned to cross into Bosnia. So we decided to visit this wonderful little town. Only 25km from Zagreb, it is home to a variety of crafters and artisans, although the real highlight is the food – especially the *kremšnita*, a truly spectacular cream slice."



The Dolomites

"Our love for the Dolomites can be summed up best by the fact that we have been there twice on the trip so far, once in the summer and once during the winter. Both times, we ended up at the same campsite (Camping Sass Dlacia), albeit with the weather a little colder in the winter. It got down to -20° in the lead-up to Christmas! We love all mountains, but there's something about the Alta Badia region of the Dolomites that really makes us happy."



Durmitor, Montenegro

"If you asked us to pick where on the trip we could go back to time and again, it would be Durmitor National Park: a place of staggering beauty, immense peacefulness and vast open spaces that allow you to be at one with yourself and the world. What's more, compared to a lot of places in Europe, it is relatively untouched by mass tourism, and you often feel as though you have the place to yourself. We loved it here so much, we even started looking at property prices on our second visit."



Zeeland, Netherlands

"This is a sticker we should never have acquired, which makes it even more meaningful. We would have loved to include Belgium and the Netherlands on our itinerary from the start, but thanks to the 90/180 Schengen Rule, we simply didn't have time. Then life threw us a curveball and we ended up back in the UK at the start of the year, which gave us the unexpected opportunity for a mini-trip to explore a few pockets of these two brilliant countries, with Zeeland proving to be a particular highlight."



Flanders, Belgium

"This was the very first sticker we bought, and the one that sparked the idea of our collection. As a cycling fan, over the years I had watched so many races from Belgium, where among the sea of flags, the most prominent were those with the *Vlaamse Leeuw* (Flemish Lion) on them. The sticker looked a bit odd being on the box all alone at the start, but it has many more to keep it company now."



Sarajevo

"I remember as a teenager reading *Zlata's Diary*, documenting a child's experiences in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war in the 1990s. Ever since, I've wanted to visit this city, to understand its history and meet some of the people who live there. Sarajevo is an incredible place, full of history, culture and great optimism. It is also home to some wonderful food."



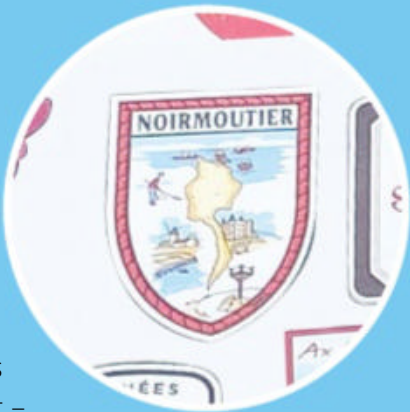
Napapiiri, Finland

"We didn't actually take the motorhome to the Arctic Circle (we flew there instead), but we did enjoy the most magical four days in this wonderful city while the 'van was being serviced in Italy. It was very much a spur of the moment decision, but something that has been on our travel bucket list for some time, ever since the children were born. Seeing the motorhomes there, all kitted up for the winter, has also given us motivation to make the journey north later in our trip."



Noirmoutier

"The nature of living life on the road full-time means that you visit a lot of places, more than it's always possible to remember off the top of your head. This fabulous French island was different – even to this day, almost a year since we were there, all four of us remember it as though it were yesterday. There was such a laidback vibe to the place, it was impossible not to just slow down and take it easy – something that we have been doing ever since!"



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NIGHTSTOPS

The latest information on all our current destinations in the UK

The Nightstop Scheme is run by us in conjunction with the Motor Caravanners' Club (MCC), and the sites are certificated locations (CLs); you don't have to join any club to use them. You'll need to ring the relevant site to confirm whether there's space for you before you visit: you'll find information at www.practicalmotorhome.com/nightstops. For further information about the MCC, visit www.themotorcaravannersclub.co.uk.

- 1 Airman Hotel SG17 5JF
- 2 The Black Horse Pub HP16 9AX
- 3 The Seven Wives PE27 5RF
- 4 The Penrhiwgaled Arms SA44 6LN
- 5 Railway Hotel SA32 7LQ
- 6 Mousehole Camping TR19 6XB
- 7 Blenkinsopp Castle Inn CA8 7JS
- 8 The Thelbridge Cross Inn EX17 4SQ
- 9 The Ship Inn YO15 1EW
- 10 The Crown Inn GL7 5QH
- 11 Elton Farm GL14 1JU
- 12 The Gloucester Old Spot GL51 9SY
- 13 The Flying Bull Inn GU33 7JB
- 14 Three Horseshoes GU34 3AE
- 15 Landsdowne PR4 6XP
- 16 The Hawthorne OL4 5LN
- 17 The Bluebell Inn PE12 6SN
- 18 The Riverside Hotel Surfleet Ltd PE11 4DG
- 19 Banham Community Centre NR16 2HB
- 20 Great Danes Country Inn PE37 8BG
- 21 South Moor Farm YO13 0LW
- 22 The Seaview Hotel SA65 9PL
- 23 The Tipple Inn SN8 3EQ
- 24 Carpenters Arms DE7 4PP
- 25 The Old Stables DG10 9QX
- 26 Black Horse Inn DL7 0SH
- 27 The Red Cow SG8 8RN
- 28 The Park Club Cleveleys FY5 2BJ
- 29 The Bannockburn Inn KW8 6JY
- 30 The Bennet Arms IP30 9LH
- 31 The Tarrington Arms HR1 4HX
- 32 Angel View Hotel NE9 7UB
- 33 The Mill Leisure Holiday Cottage & Campsite SY21 8BJ
- 34 The Harrow Inn SN4 OAE

NOTE
We strongly recommend double checking that Nightstops are open before travelling

Stop of the month

3 The Seven Wives
Ramsey Road, St. Ives, Huntingdon PE27 5RF
Overnight stay £5; with electric, £15; with electric and water, £20. Open all year. Live music in pub on Friday evenings/Sunday afternoons.



FIND FULL DETAILS ONLINE www.practicalmotorhome.com/nightstops

Puzzle time

Whether you're on tour or at home, relax with a cup of tea and some brain-teasing puzzles to ponder!

SUDOKU

To solve the puzzle, each row, column and 3x3 box must contain the numbers 1 to 9. No single digit can appear twice in any one row, column or 3x3 box

			4	8			9	
2	8			6	1			3
5								8
	1	9		4		7		
			2	7	6		5	
7						6	8	
9		3				8		5
	6		3	5			1	7
	5				2			

WORDWISE

S	M	E
S	B	E
S	L	A

You have 15 minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters in the grid. Each word must contain four or more letters, one of which must be the central square. No proper nouns, plurals or foreign words are allowed. There is one nine-letter word in the grid, for which the clue is: get together.

10 = average
More than 20 = well done

NOTES

HALF & HALF

Which Royal Navy captain led an 1839 Antarctic expedition aboard the ships HMS Terror and HMS Erebus?

Cross out a letter in each square to get a grid filled with words. The uncrossed-out letters in the shaded squares give the answer.

S	Y	A	Z	C
B	H	T	R	D
T		E		R
L		R		L
A	S	A	R	O
U	D	O	G	E
R		M		U
N		U		S
G	L	T	S	T
T	K	A	K	S

ANSWER
DOWN SLANG, AROMA, DRESS
ACROSS SHARD, ADORE, GLASS
HALF & HALF
ANSWER ASSEMBLES
SABLE, SLAB, SLABS
BLESSSES, LABS, LAMB, LAMBS,
BLAME, BLAMES, BLASE, BLESS,
BEAM, BEAMLESS, BEAMS, BEMA,
BASE, BASELESS, BASES, BASS,
ASSEMBLE, BALE, BALES, BALM,
ABLE, AMBLE, AMBLES
WORDWISE

1	5	7	8	9	2	3	4	6
8	6	2	3	5	4	9	1	7
9	4	3	6	1	7	8	2	5
7	2	5	1	3	9	6	8	4
4	3	8	2	7	6	1	5	9
6	1	9	5	4	8	7	3	2
5	9	1	7	2	3	4	6	8
2	8	4	9	6	1	5	7	3
3	7	6	4	8	5	2	9	1

ANSWERS
SUDOKU



Arrival

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^{*}£17 a month is for new Camping and Caravanning Club members purchasing new personal based Motorhome Standard cover only on a monthly renewing contract. Vehicle based cover from £16 a month. Existing Camping and Caravanning Club member personal based prices from £12 a month. [^]Comparison based on RAC Arrival against standard level of cover from other major providers as of 20.05.22. [†]Not available to current Camping and Caravanning Club members. The RAC will forward your details onto The Camping and Caravanning Club for them to set up free membership for one year. They will send you more information about the Club including a campsite directory. These should be sent to you in approximately 21 days. For enquiries about your Camping and Caravanning Club membership please call 0247 647 5442. Offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer and may be withdrawn at any time. All offers and prices correct at time of print 01.03.23 and subject to change. The Camping and Caravanning Club Ltd is an introducer appointed representative of RAC Financial Services. Breakdown cover arranged and administered by RAC Financial Services Limited (Registered No 05171817) and provided by RAC Motoring Services (Registered No 01424399) and/or RAC Insurance Ltd (Registered No 2355834). Registered in England and Wales; Registered Offices: RAC House, Brockhurst Crescent, Walsall WS5 4AW. RAC Motoring Services and RAC Financial Services Limited are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. RAC Insurance Ltd is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

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Q&A SPECIAL

Over the past month we asked for your pressing motorhome questions on social media. We've now put your queries to our experts – from paintwork protection to whiffy toilets, we've got you covered!

OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS

REVIEWS EDITOR

Peter Baber



Peter started off in journalism as a staff writer for *Practical Motorhome* back in the early 1990s. After more than 20 years in business journalism, he found he missed hitting the road. He now spends much of his time doing just that, reviewing new 'vans and finding the latest touring news.

DEPUTY EDITOR

Paul Critcher



Practical Motorhome deputy editor Paul has more than 20 years' experience as a journalist, and has covered everything from sailing in the Seychelles to shark diving in the Bahamas. A lover of the great outdoors, he enjoys the chance to travel and explore. His next trip takes him to the Outer Hebrides.

CONTRIBUTOR

Diamond Dave



A motorhome user for 30 years, Dave is a qualified motor mechanic and auto electrician who runs his own servicing company covering MOTs, habitation and base vehicle servicing. His monthly column in *Practical Motorhome* provides readers with a wealth of technical expertise.

CONTRIBUTOR

Nick Harding



Nick has worked for a wide variety of publications, testing thousands of vehicles and visiting almost as many different places throughout the UK, Europe and beyond. These days, he's never happier than when he's out and about in his latest campervan, a Volkswagen California.

CONTRIBUTOR

Nigel Hutson



Keen camper Nigel writes on all aspects of his lifelong hobby, including travel, reviews and technical articles, for *Practical Motorhome*. He prefers to describe himself as 'enthusiast', rather than expert, but his vast experience and knowledge of all things touring are truly impressive.

CONTRIBUTOR

Gentleman Jack



Gentleman Jack provides words, photos and advice on everything motorcaravanning-related, including new and pre-owned vehicles, live-in tests, DIY projects, owner satisfaction surveys, sites, services and nostalgia. He is also currently enjoying touring in his 13th commercial coachbuilt.

CONTRIBUTOR

John Sootheran



John began his long career in journalism working at *Practical Photography*, before moving to automotive titles. He has won several Caravan Writers' Guild Awards, and says that his favourite touring destinations are in France: "I love it there – we've had some amazing adventures."

EDITOR

Sarah Wakely



Sarah joined *Practical Motorhome* in 2006, before becoming editor in 2017. She's toured across thousands of miles in many different motorhomes, including trips to the Faroe Islands, Italy, Romania and Spain. Her favourite trip was a two-week trip to stunning Iceland in a Bilbo's campervan.

TRAVEL

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Q We are planning our first tour abroad since the rule changes following Brexit, and we're wondering how to interpret the new regulations about taking food overseas.

Many articles and websites merely duplicate verbatim the rules that we are not allowed to take any meat, milk or dairy products with us.

I appreciate that there could be a small potential risk if we were carrying fresh meat from an unknown origin, or unpasteurised milk or cheese, but do these rules really apply to small quantities of chicken in a tinned curry, which has been in effect sterilised, or to cartons of UHT milk?

We used to take tinned chicken and ham that are produced in Denmark. Surely taking these should not be a problem, because they have already been sanctioned by the EU?

We are also not allowed to take fruit, vegetables and plant products. Again, the question I have is, do these rules include tinned goods such as baked beans, which started life as a plant, or teabags, which contain dried plants?

If you take the rules to the nth degree, most food is derived from meat or plant products, so what are we really allowed to carry with us?

Surely unopened tins present no risk if they are for our own consumption (1)?

Your experiences and insight into what happened at the border for yourselves or other readers would be appreciated; otherwise it looks like we can take virtually no food with us. Thank you!
C Montgomery

A Paul Critcher replies...

The rules do indeed state that if you travel to the EU from a non-EU country, you are not allowed to bring meat or dairy products (there are some exceptions for powdered infant milk and food, and the restrictions on fish and shellfish are different). As far as we have been able to ascertain, there are no stipulations for products originally

2 The Wild Atlantic Way takes you through Ireland's most spectacular coastal scenery, such as County Donegal, in the north-west



manufactured in the EU. So until such time as alternative arrangements are made or negotiated between the UK and the EU, you should adhere to the rules. It's unlikely border controls will spend much time worrying about tinned chicken curry, but why take the risk?

The EU's website clearly states: "If you are carrying any meat or dairy products which you have not declared, they will be confiscated and destroyed, and you may also be fined or face criminal prosecution."

We'd love to hear the experiences of readers travelling to the EU post-Brexit – email talk@practicalmotorhome.com.

For more information, see:

🌐 europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/carry/meat-dairy-animal/index_en.htm

🌐 food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-products-movements/personal-imports_en

OVERSEAS ADVENTURE

Q We've been touring for about three years now, but have never ventured abroad before. I'm feeling a little nervous about driving overseas, but we think that this is a good time to try it out. We're not sure where to head for, and are wondering, what might make a good destination for our first trip overseas?

Jim Blackwood

A Paul Critcher replies...

The obvious answer to this query has to be France – it's only a short ferry crossing away, and it has a huge network of *aires* and campsites to choose from, beautiful towns and countryside, a very pleasant climate and ample opportunity to enjoy good food and wine.

If you do choose to visit France, we can thoroughly recommend *All the Aires (North and South)*, from Vicarious Media.

🌐 vicarious-shop.com

However, for something a little different, and if you're feeling nervous about driving on the other side of the road, why not consider Ireland?

The Wild Atlantic Way (2) on the west coast is the longest coastal route in the world and packed with interest and character – and you still drive on the left!

You can get ferries to the Republic from the UK to Holyhead and Fishguard, or if you prefer to visit the North, from Liverpool to Belfast.

Although Ireland doesn't have the network of *aires* and campsites you'll find in France, there are plenty of great sites along the coast and the people are incredibly accommodating and welcoming. It's



1 Following Brexit, there are new regulations about taking foodstuffs into EU countries

worth noting that it is mostly seasonal, however, with few sites open all year. Find out more at:

- 🌐 campingireland.ie
- 🌐 thewildatlanticway.com

Another option is to join an escorted tour. If you want to travel further but with guided support, this is an excellent option. A number of companies and the Caravan and Motorhome Club offer a range of destinations across Europe.

- 🌐 camc.com/europeantours
- 🌐 crossingsmotorhometours.com
- 🌐 gbmotorhometours.com
- 🌐 manda-motorhome-tours.com

BUYING 'VANS

DELIVERY DATE

Q I am still waiting for delivery of a motorhome I agreed to buy in August last year, and I suspect that the dealer is hoping I will give up so he can sell it on for a higher price.

Is this normal?

Name and address supplied

A Peter Baber replies...

The delay is not unusual. If you think the dealer is stalling, check the terms and conditions that (I hope) you signed when you paid the deposit. Alternatively email the NCC (info@thencc.org.uk) with your issue; if the dealer is a member, they could help.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Q Why doesn't anyone publish a meaningful guide to prices for secondhand motorhomes?

Peter Clements



4 Jack stores the wheelchair in the walk-in shower compartment

A Nick Harding replies...

Good question! So tricky, though. The motorhome sector is tiny compared to the car market, where sheer numbers mean it is feasible to publish accurate figures for most models.

The utterly fragmented nature of the motorhome market, in comparison (so many makes and models, so relatively few sales) means variations in base vehicle as well as overall specifications, more often than not from year to year. That in turn means guides with any kind of 'real world' accuracy simply wouldn't be feasible.

You can, of course, do quick internet searches of makes and models you're particularly interested in, to see how the prices stack up.

FINDING SPACE

Q We are currently considering buying a motorhome again, after a long break, but for the first time, we have to try to accommodate a small, dismantled mobility scooter, and maybe up to six small oxygen cylinders. If we were away for more than a weekend, we should be able to arrange for extra cylinders to be delivered to a campsite.

The scooter weighs 31kg and the tanks are about 5kg each. So we'll need to buy a vehicle with a generous payload.

We are aware of being able to make adjustments, such as not filling fuel and water tanks completely and being as minimalist as possible with the amount of stuff we carry with us.

So far, given our preference for two single beds, someone has recommended the Auto-Sleeper Executive.

We are Auto-Sleepers fans, but we would welcome other suggestions for models to investigate. We have a very small budget and know that we are looking at older vehicles.

Evelyn Elworthy

A Gentleman Jack replies...

Welcome back to the fold, Evelyn. I'm assuming you only want to consider motorhomes under 3500kg, which can be driven on an ordinary car licence.

There are plenty around with a good payload for those on a limited budget (3), but you'll have to be prepared to travel for a viewing. You'll also find more detailed advice in this month's Used 'Van Buyer Special (p76).

A friend of ours has oxygen cylinders delivered to campsites with no problem. We also travel with mobility aids in our own 6.6m coachbuilt. For a while, we



3 Secondhand doesn't have to be second best! This recent photograph of a 2002 Elddis Sunseeker up for sale suggests that the interior is immaculate. Asking price is £10,500

took a knock-down electric scooter, but we later changed to a lightweight folding wheelchair.

All such aids must be properly secured for transit. If you have no garage, the obvious place to store them is under the seat lockers. I found the scooter battery pack difficult to retrieve from there, so we now store such items in the walk-in shower (4, previous page). The DIY front panel slides up for easy access.

Below is a list of pre-owned lovelies for you to consider. All sold well when new, so should be reasonably easy to find.

Up to £7500

- Auto-Sleeper Talisman & Executive
- Auto-Sleeper Duetto (PVC) pre-2001
- Auto-Trail Apache & Navajo Apache
- Auto-Trail Cheyenne 614
- Elddis Autoquest 320/400
- Elddis Voyager 2/3
- Swift Capri 540/610
- Swift Royal 540/610
- Swift Kon-Tiki 600

£7500 to £15,000

- Autocruise Stargazer & Starquest
- Auto-Sleeper Executive

- Auto-Sleeper Pollensa & Rienza
- Auto-Trail Apache 600
- Auto-Trail Cheyenne 630/634U
- Bessacarr E435
- Elddis Autoquest 120/130/140/145
- Swift Sundance 580PR/590RS

CHOOSING SIDES

Q My wife and I love travelling in our motorhome, most of all because it allows us to make frequent trips across the channel to France and Belgium. We don't really tour much in the UK.

With that in mind, we are wondering whether it might make better sense to buy a left-hand-drive vehicle? We have seen dealers near where we live who specialise in these. What do you think?
Tony Brooks

A Peter Baber replies...

You told me where you live, and there are a handful of dealers near you who often list LHD 'vans. When you live so close to the Channel Tunnel and the ferry ports, getting such a model can seem like a very good idea.

But you might find there are hidden drawbacks that you haven't yet thought

about. Insuring such a vehicle might prove more time-consuming, as would obtaining spare parts, because the supplying company would likely assume you have an RHD vehicle until you tell them otherwise.

You would also probably find it harder to sell the 'van on, unless you sell it back to the dealer you bought it from. And are you sure you're never going to tour in this country? Driving an LHD vehicle here could be just as unnerving as the other way around.

UNIMPRESSED BY PRICES

Q We always had a dream that when we retired, we would purchase a campervan and head off into the sunset in it. However, now that time has come, we have been rather shocked to see just how expensive such vehicles are.

We had always thought that a van conversion would be cheaper, because it tends to have a lower level of spec than larger coachbuilt motorhomes.

But they are frequently the same price, and in some cases more expensive. Could you please explain why this is?
David (surname withheld)



‘Van conversions are much more labour intensive to produce than coachbuilts – everything has to be worked on and fitted within the confines of the original vehicle’



6 Autonomous or driverless motorhomes are likely to remain in the realms of science fiction for the present

A Peter Baber replies...

It is a common misconception that van conversions will be much cheaper than coachbuilt motorhomes. In practice, if you were to average out all of the available models, you would probably find that van conversions are cheaper – but only marginally (5).

Van conversions are more expensive than you might think, mainly because they are much more labour intensive to produce. Everything has to be worked on and fitted within the confines of the original vehicle, and this will also often mean that there can only be one person working on it at a time.

With a coachbuilt, by contrast, you start off with a blank chassis, onto which items can be fitted, often before the external GRP shell goes on. This means that elements of the vehicle can be produced more quickly, away from the assembly line, and then only brought in when needed. Such a set-up makes it easier to build 'vans in a modular way, reducing the costs still further.

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

Q A few years ago, when there were lots of forecasts in the press about driverless or autonomous vehicles soon becoming available, we thought this would be a wonderful opportunity for motorhomes. With a driverless 'van, you might not need to devote as much

space in the vehicle to the cab, which is largely redundant as soon as you turn up on site. But now everything seems to have gone quiet. Do you know why?
Russell Peters

A Peter Baber replies...

I agree that the excitement about autonomous vehicles seems to have died down – and not just with motorhomes.

The only company that did appear to be carrying out research into driverless motorhomes was Erwin Hymer Group's North American operation, which was the only part of the group not bought by Thor Industries when the US company acquired EHG in 2019. Left on its own, it later closed down.

Fans of autonomous vehicles may also say that the pandemic has pushed development back. But I suspect that in reality, there were far more problems obstructing their progress than we were led to believe, and all that hype about the driverless car being just around the corner was exactly that – hype.

I do think that we might see more innovation brought into 'vans that are semi-autonomous, such as adaptive cruise control. But a vision of touring life where we all swan around having a jolly time on the road while the 'van does the driving for us is likely to remain science fiction for some time to come (6).

MAINTENANCE

GOING COMPLETELY BLANK

Q My rear camera AV1 (normal display mode) on the display became intermittent and eventually failed because the cable running from the camera to display the AV1 wire became open circuit.

I switched the camera to the AV2 cable, thinking that would resolve the problem. It now works well on the AV2 display when in neutral and any forward gear, but once reverse is selected and the reverse sensor is triggered, the display reverts to AV1, giving a blank screen.

Have you experienced this? Is there an easy way to stop the sensor wire from the gearbox/stick activating the display? I don't want to change my camera system if at all possible.

I was told that it was the green wire within the loom that was the trigger. However, that was disconnected and unfortunately, there is no difference!
Alun Thomas

A Diamond Dave replies...

I'm not entirely sure if this is a single or twin camera set-up, as from your description, you seem to have two cables running between camera(s) and monitor. It sounds like the monitor is set to auto-switch to AV1 input when



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reverse gear is selected, in which case it will have a wire connected to the switched reverse light supply. You need to find this wire and disconnect it.

I'm afraid that I can't help you with the question of wire colour, because there is no set standard for rear-view camera systems. If you can use a digital multimeter, you need to trace the wiring for the monitor and check which wire shows +12V when you select reverse (with the ignition on) – this is the wire to cut.

Failing that, a good auto electrician should be able to sort it out pretty quickly.

UNDER COVER

Q After five years of procrastinating, my wife and I have finally taken the plunge and ordered a new vehicle, a van conversion.

One of the options available is High Gloss Paint Glaze Protection, which will apparently protect the paintwork. Am I better off investing in this option to protect my motorhome, or should I go for a cover, such as the one that won your 2023 Best Motorhome Cover award?

I plan to store the motorhome at an open storage facility, so that means over most of the winter months. If a cover would be a better option, I'm guessing the trickle charge offered by the solar panel to the batteries would be negated – if so, is that likely to be a problem?
Ian Furse

A Diamond Dave replies...

My personal choice would be the paint protection, assuming it is one of the ceramic coating types.

This is not a one-off job, however, and cleaning the vehicle would then need to be done with specific types of detergent, or you could harm the coating. You may also need to have a top-up after about six months or so.

I had my motorhome ceramic coated by a local vehicle valeter/detailer, and I also use them to clean it, so I know it's done to the right standard.

Your motorhome is a huge investment and one worth protecting. Covers are fine, but you do need to make sure the vehicle is clean before fitting the cover,

or it could simply rub the gritty dirt into the paintwork. You'll also need to ensure that your solar panel is catered for. For more on motorhome covers, see p86.

STICKY FIX

Q The melamine has come away from the MDF on one of my 'van cupboard doors. The door is still hanging, but the MDF is held only by the push-button catch. What would be the best glue to fix it with, please? Ideally something without a strong smell.
Christine Terry

A Gentleman Jack replies...

Melamine is an organic compound, which when combined with formaldehyde, turns into a plastic that can be used

7 Titebond glue is widely available online. There are different types, so make sure you select the right one

as a laminate to provide furniture with a tough wipe-clean surface.

The problem is that melamine is shiny and non-porous, whereas MDF (medium density fibreboard) is extremely porous, so 'any old glue' just won't do.

Titebond Melamine Wood Glue (7) is widely used by the trade to join the two. It is low odour, dries clear, and has a reasonable open time

for getting the two parts aligned. I would remove the door and work on it outside on a flat surface, covered with something to prevent any scratching. Gently sand away the old adhesive residue before applying new.

I've used 3M's extra-thin strong-grab double-sided tape to make a similar (temporary) repair while on tour. I carry a roll of this and one of wide gaffer tape... just in case!

NASTY NIFFS

Q Why does my motorhome toilet smell? I use what I think is the correct dose of chemicals, but despite this, it still

smells unpleasant, particularly during the summer. Is there anything I can do about this, beyond learning to live with it and buying a clothes peg for my nose?
Carl Barnes

A Nigel Hutson replies...

If you are getting the unpleasant smell with the cassette closed, it might suggest the flap isn't sealing properly, so a replacement seal might be required. However, if that was the case, I'd expect you to leave a trail of fluid when you go to the site emptying point. If you do require a new seal, they are an easy fit.

If you're only getting the smell when having to use the toilet, I'd start by giving the cassette a thorough clean. It's surprising where things get trapped – toilet paper can be a real nuisance. I clean our cassette regularly with Thetford Duo Tank Cleaner.

Once clean, ensure there's enough water/chemical mix in the cassette to cover any waste and try upping the dosage of chemical. In warmer weather, I'd increase the dosage even more.

LIFE ON SITE

GO GADGET GO!

Q What would make a good gift for my motorcaravanning husband's significant birthday?
Jean Rogerson

A Paul Critcher replies...

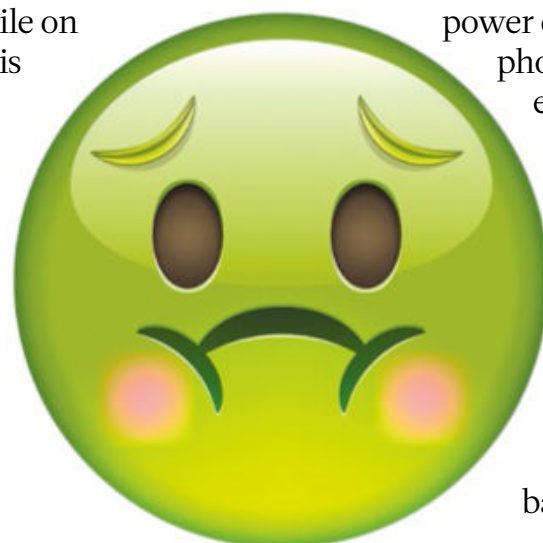
Given that it's for a 'significant' birthday, I've pushed the boat out with these suggestions.

First up is a digital projector, allowing you to project films or TV shows onto the side of your 'van or the interior of an awning. The BenQ GS50 (£729 from online retailers) has a 1080p full HD resolution picture and will auto-adjust, depending on how bright the day is. It comes with a Bluetooth speaker.

Alternatively, what about a portable power charger? I've just taken delivery of one for testing. The Bluetti EB3A (£299) looks great and is rated for up to 600W and a 1200W surge wattage, enough to power devices such as laptops, phones, mini-fridges, and even slow-cookers.

It can power a 10W light for 22 hours, a 60W car fridge for four hours and an 80W TV for three hours straight.

It's also portable and fast charging, and makes an excellent back-up power supply. ➡



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GENTLE GIANTS

Q I know a lot of campsites welcome guests with pets, but we have two large German Shepherds, which we are aware can be a worry for some people. Could you recommend any sites where they would be welcome?
DM Smith

A Sarah Wakely replies...
 Taking your dog with you is one of the many benefits of motorcaravanning (8) – I do so myself – but you're right, not everywhere will welcome our canine friends. For starters, take a look at our *Top 100 Sites Guide 2023*.
practicalcaravan.com/locations
 Here you'll find a list of parks that do accept dogs, and details of dog-friendly



8 Check your chosen campsite welcomes any breed of dog

9 It pays to shop around for the right barbecue



facilities. We'd also suggest calling the site direct if you're unsure.

It goes without saying, but we should all keep our dogs under full control at all times while on site.

COOKING WITH GAS

Q Could you please recommend the best travel barbecue (9)? We don't want to do anything too elaborate, but we tend to tour with friends, so one with a sizeable cooking area would be ideal.
Michael Shadwell

A Paul Critcher replies...
 This is a competitive field with lots of products on the market, but we've been impressed by the Weber Traveler gas barbecue. It has a large cooking area, yet is compact and streamlined when travelling, and packs down easily with a one-handed release. The build is also robust, it's easily portable and cooking performance is good. It's pricey, though, – £490 on Weber's website, although you might find it cheaper elsewhere.

For some alternatives, check out our online barbecue buying guide:
practicalmotorhome.com/advice/buying-selling/buying-guides/best-motorhome-barbecue

TECHNICAL

TYRE CAPACITY

Q I have ordered a new Roller Team Pegaso 745 with a weight upgrade from 3500 to 3650kg. We are intending (if it ever arrives) to tour Norway. I need to buy tyres for it which are suitable

for snowy conditions, but I am getting conflicting reports concerning the sidewall weight load.

According to Roller Team, the weight across the front axle is 2100kg; across the back, 2500kg. I was told at a tyre depot that I need a tyre with a weight load capacity of 1250 (per corner) at the back and 1050 at the front. If I err on the safe side and get the same weight loading tyres on the front and the back, I need tyres with a tyre load index of 116.

But does this allow for extra loading of the motorhome at its full weight capacity, or should I increase the load index per tyre to around 120? The last thing I need is a blowout – especially in the snow! Thank you.

Robert Clayton

A Diamond Dave replies...
 It makes perfect sense to run the same size and load-rated tyres all round. The cost penalty is minimal, so there is no good reason to run lower-rated tyres on the front axle. The tyre depot is quite correct: with a maximum rear axle weight of 2500kg, each tyre on it needs a load rating of 1250kg minimum. A 116 rating gives exactly that, so would be at its limits if the vehicle is fully loaded.

My advice would be to go for the 120 rating, as this gives you some spare capacity and the only downside might be a slightly harder ride.

REDUCED OPTIONS

Q I have a 3.5t 6m Fiat Ducato-based Westfalia campervan on order and due for delivery at the end of the year. The dealer has informed me that one ➔



10 An NHS frontline coachbuilt ambulance on the Ducato wide-track chassis-cab could offer an easy DIY conversion to a motorhome, after being sold out of service

of my chosen options, the Maxi-Chassis, has been cancelled, because Fiat has reduced the number of options on UK RHD vans. This seems strange and rather concerning, especially bearing in mind that our emergency services require this option for their Ducato ambulance fleet. Could you shine any light on this?

In addition, could you explain what my cancellation rights are when a dealer informs me that my order needs to be changed as described above?
Eric Walters

A Gentleman Jack replies...
It is true that the number of RHD Ducato base vehicle options has been reduced, apparently temporarily.

First, however, an explanation of the differences between a 'Light' 3500kg chassis and a 'Maxi' 3500kg one.

Maxi has beefed-up suspension, hubs and brakes. It has 16" wheels as standard, whereas the Light has 15" wheels. This makes no difference to the MTPLM, but the Maxi does have higher maximum axle weights. Light Ducato: front 1850kg, rear 2000kg. Maxi Ducato: front 2100kg, rear 2400kg. The Light has the advantage of an extra 50kg payload.

The different axle weights are to aid users with a heavy item at the rear of the vehicle, such as a cherry picker, forklift or diesel generator. It makes larger MTPLM upgrades a plating exercise, with no mechanical modification. I guess neither will apply to your 'van.

My coachbuilt has a Light 3500kg base and I can confirm that the brakes are good, even towing a heavy trailer.

The only disadvantage to 15" wheels is an optimistic speedometer (+7.5%). But you can request factory-fitted 16" wheels on the Light chassis.

Regarding the legal position, the terms that you signed up to should be on the reverse of the deposit receipt supplied by the retailer. Under consumer law, there would have to be a significant change in spec to nullify the contract and I'm not learned enough to say if (for example) a change in wheel size fulfils this. More information can be found online:

- honestjohn.co.uk
- moneysavingexpert.com
- citizensadvice.org.uk
- gov.uk

Type 'vehicle not supplied as ordered' into your internet search engine and click on the links.

Finally, the NHS frontline ambulances (10) in our area are mostly coachbuilt on a Ducato wide-track chassis-cab, with a few conversions on the H3 L4 panel van, both on the Maxi as standard.

DIY converters might be interested to learn that early vehicles are beginning to be taken out of service and sold. A few of them have already been converted!

SOLAR POWER

Q Could a solar panel (11) provide enough power to run the heating on low while my 'van is in storage, without flattening the battery?
C Botham

A John Sootheran replies...
Solar panels are designed to keep the leisure battery topped up, and are ideal for low-current devices such as a 12V TV, or alarms and trackers.

An electric heater requires far more current and will deplete the battery more quickly than most panels can recharge it, possibly causing long-term damage to the leisure battery.

Theoretically, you could run a 900W electric heater, such as that in Truma's Combi D 4 E system, using an array of solar panels (three x 300W), but in reality, that assumes maximum solar output all of the time – and you'd need roof space for all of those panels.

In short, a solar panel is not an effective way to run the heating while your 'van is in storage, and leaving a heater on for long periods, unattended, is something we'd highly recommend against doing. ■



11 Solar panels on a motorhome are designed to keep the leisure battery topped up



FROM
£63,259

FORD CUSTOM LIMITED MISANO 4.1

This is the highest-specification campervan we've made during the last 10 years, based on the multi-award-winning Ford Custom. We have over 60 on order for 2023, so stock is available in manual or auto. It's a five-seater, with a sliding, crash-tested bed system, four berths, Webasto hot-water system, tailgate shower, 150W solar panel, lithium battery, Remis window blinds, alloys, heated seats, A/C, rev cam, met paint and DAB are all included, plus much more. See website for more spec. **Prices from £63,259** for 130ps manual. Type Approved & Ford Approved.



FROM
£22K - £35K

TOYOTA ALPHARD SERIES 1 & 2

We've converted Toyota Alphards for more than 10 years, and we now offer these in the old and new shapes. They are 2.4 or 3.0 V6 with 220PS, and as our vehicles are 2008 onwards, these models currently fall within ULEZ and Clean-Air Zone limits. They have side conversions and two berths, with the option of a small child's bed in the roof. The Alphard now comes with a crash-tested rear-bed/seat system. All have a 12-month warranty, and **prices range from around £22k to £35k**, on models from 2006 to 2012 and mileages from 15,000 to 70,000. All are new conversions.



FROM
£45,000

DFSK 39KW FULLY ELECTRIC

This is our DFSK mid-sized campervan. With many EV campers already costing well over £75,000, this one, with its 39kw motor, is only £45,000 OTR after the government grant. It has a rear kitchen and side seat, with choice of gas, electric or diesel heating & cooking. Air-conditioning, power-assisted steering and a three-year warranty come as standard. **From £45,000 OTR.**



FROM
£21K - £26K

NISSAN SERENA 2.0 & 2.0 MILD HYBRID

The Nissan Serena has the option of a rear conversion with five (factory) belted seats, or a 4-seater side conversion. All are 2.0-litre petrol, 136PS automatics, which are ULEZ and Clean-Air Zone compliant. Mild Hybrids are also available. Aged from 2010 to 2013, and with **prices from £21k to £26k** (depending on mileage and age), they measure 4.72m long and only 1.92m high.



FROM
£58,000

TOYOTA PROACE MATINO 3 180PS AUTO

We have been converting the Proace since 2016, and we have 30 examples, in either silver or grey, coming through in 2023. All are the 180, auto, MWB version, featuring side conversion and elevating roof. They are carlike to drive, under 2m high and have a sliding, crash-tested rear seat/bed system, alloys, SAT-NAV, DAB, Bluetooth, Metallic Paint and blind-spot mirrors. They have up to 10 years manufacturer's base-vehicle warranty. **£58,000 OTR.**



FROM
£26K - £35K

NISSAN CARAVAN 2.0 OR 2.5 PETROL AUTO

Called the Nissan Caravan up to 2012 and NV350 Caravan afterwards, in petrol form these campervans are ULEZ & clean air zone compliant. The Nissan Caravan High Top comes in two sizes: 4.7m long and 1.7m wide, or 5.08m long and 1.88m wide. You have the option of a front L-shaped conversion with rear single beds, or a side conversion with crash-tested sliding seat system (as an upgrade). Models aged 2008 to 2013 and all are petrol automatic. **Prices from £26k to £35k.**

**Please contact us for more details on any of the vehicles mentioned.
Telephone 01226 668800, email info@wellhouseleisure.com or book a Factory
Tour on our website wellhouseleisure.com**

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WILDAX Proteus



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The Ford Transit Custom is a pleasure to drive with the 130Bhp diesel engine and 6 speed gearbox, the driving experience is smooth and quiet.

All the mod-con's are provided to make your journey as easy as possible. The sleeping arrangement is a pull down double roof bed with another double bed made from the sliding bench. For day time relaxing, the cab seats rotate to face the rear bench.

Unit G9, Lock View, Lowfields Business Park, Elland HX5 9HD | T: 01422 372111

Huge Dealer Network

Visit our website to see full details

Specification

Motorhome

4 berth	✓
5 seat belts	✓
Kitchen with hob, sink and storage	✓
40 litre fridge	✓
LED Lighting	✓

Options

Webasto Diesel Heater	•
16 inch Alloy Wheels (Ford)	•
Solar Panel	•
Auto Gearbox	•
Leather Upholstery	•

Base Vehicle

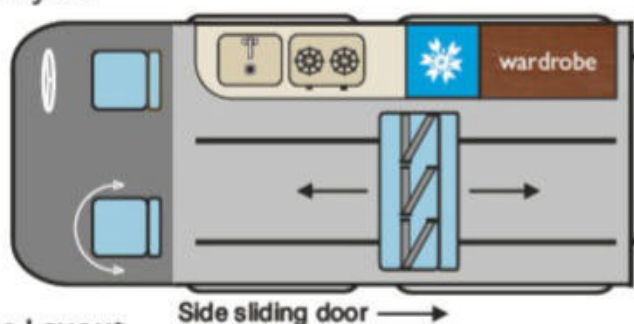
- Ford Transit Custom 130BHP Trend, 6 speed manual
- Metallic Paint
- Rear Camera
- Front & Rear Parking Sensors
- Air Con
- Auto wipers and headlights
- Lane keeping alert
- DAB Radio with USB and Bluetooth
- Heated windscreen
- Fog Light

Dimensions

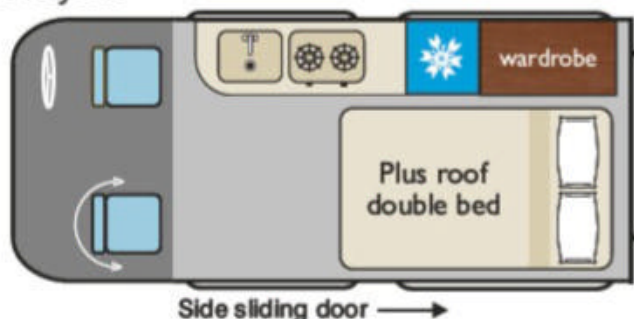
Length - 4.97m Width - 2.08m (folded mirrors) Height - 2.00m

WildAx Motorhomes are based in West Yorkshire where we manufacture a range of motorhomes and campers. As part of the Rapido Group of motorhome manufacturers we are one of the largest groups in Europe with over 40 years of motorhome manufacturing experience. Our main priority is to build a high quality, high specification motorhome which we sell through a specially selected network of dealers around the UK.

Day Time Layout



Night Time Layout



WildAx Motorhomes
01422 372111

Head Office and Factory Elland HX5 9HD, UK
wildaxmotorhomes.com

E S Hartley Motorhomes
01539 822450

Ings, Kendal LA8 9PY
eshartleygroup.co.uk/motorhomes

E S Hartley Motorhomes
0151 350 6870

Ellesmere Port CH65 3DD
eshartleygroup.co.uk/motorhomes

Maple Garage
01964 534144

Main Road, Mappleton. Hornsea. HU18 1XT
maplegarage.co.uk

Nick Whale Motorhomes
01386 870852

Evesham WR11 8SN, UK
nickwhalemotorhomes.co.uk

Southern Motorhome Centre
0800 028 3417

Brickfields Industrial Estate, Kiln Ln, Bracknell RG12 1NA
southernmotorhomes.co.uk

Wiltshire Motorhomes
01225 896699

Lancaster Rd, Bowerhill, Melksham SN12 6SS
wiltshiremotorhomes.co.uk

Highbridge Caravan Centre
01626 832792

Higher Brooks Plantation, Teigngrace, Newton Abbot TQ12 6QZ
highbridgecaravans.co.uk

Geoff Cox Leisure
01332 781562

Derby Road, Marehay, Ripley DE5 8JN
geoffcox.co.uk/leisure

Thompson Leisure
028 9269 3999

21 Rowantree Road, Dromore, Northern Ireland BT25 1NN
thompsonleisure.com

Specialist Vehicles GB
07377 577376

Rye Wharf, Rye Harbour Road, Rye, E.Sussex TN31 7TE

Motorhome Escapes
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Royston Lodge, Bathgate, EH48 1JX
motorhomeescapes.co.uk

Highland Campervans
01667 457304

Kerrowaird Steading, Dalcross, Inverness, IV2 7JQ
highlandcampervans.com

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touring

Inspirational travel stories, plus expert advice, hints and tips, to help you get the most out of your motorhome



PAUL CRITCHER

There are many good things about having a motorhome, but one of the best is that you can use it to complement your hobbies and interests. Do you like banger or rally car racing? Then stay on or near the race venue in the comfort of your own 'van. Early starts or remote locations are no longer a problem. It's the same with music festivals and outdoor events – many provide dedicated fields for motorhomes and campers. We've listed a few upcoming events overleaf and we'd love to hear your experiences of festival touring. Email talk@practicalmotorhome.com and let us know about your adventures!

Talking of interests, why not learn a new skill on site? Jo Davies rounds up some great options (p54). Elsewhere, we explore a jamboree of destinations and experiences, with everything from long-distance touring in Spain (p58) to gentle strolling in Middle England (p44). Susan Taylor gets the ball rolling, with a trip to majestic North Wales (p40), all coastal castles and mountain walks.

Meanwhile, Peter Baber makes his own Norman Conquest in France (p50), our Local Authority (p62) is in Fleetwood, Lancashire, and Lyndhurst, in the New Forest, has plenty to keep you entertained for 48 hours (p48).

All this travel talk is giving me itchy feet – perhaps it's time to take in a festival myself!

paul.critcher@futurenet.com

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Festival season

We round up some brilliant outdoor events for all the family

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North Wales

Sue Taylor enjoys riverside walking amid great mountain scenery

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Middle England

Andria Massey revisits two centres of architecture and culture

48 48 hours in...

Lyndhurst, New Forest

Make the most of your weekend with our hour-by-hour guide

50 Getaway

Northern France

Peter Baber's Normandy tour offered the opportunity to explore a unique island, gorgeous beaches and picturesque villages

54 10 top sites...

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Jo Davies selects some great places to acquire fresh skills

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Marcus, Kim and the children take a leisurely ferry trip to Spain, returning to sunnier climes after a rather chilly detour to the UK

62 Local Authority

Fleetwood, Lancashire

Let the locals guide you around this traditional seaside resort

THIS MONTH

News and events to put in your diary

Fantastic festivals

1



Chris Taylor

12-15 May 2023

■ Arran Mountain Festival

Outdoor enthusiasts should head to Scotland to enjoy this superb hillwalking and mountaineering festival, offering a wide choice of walks and climbs that range from moderate to extreme.

Be aware that some moderate walks involve easy scrambling, elements of exposure and some rough terrain – this is very much a connoisseur's festival.

You'll also be able to attend talks and a ceilidh at social events open to all. Events and walks are individually priced.

📧 arranmountainfestival.co.uk

Stay at Lochranza Caravan and Camping Site

📧 arran-campsite.com

12-21 May 2023

■ Bath Festival

The theme of this year's great celebration of music and books is 'Opening Up' and visitors can

enjoy a variety of entertainment throughout the city, with the focus on Bath's Guildhall.

See award-winning writer Joanne Harris, of *Chocolat* fame, in conversation, listen to Bath Festival Orchestra in rehearsal, and enjoy a walking tour of 'Bath on Screen'. All events are individually priced.

📧 bathfestivals.org.uk/the-bath-festival

Stay at Bath Chew Valley Caravan Park

📧 bathchewvalley.co.uk

12-28 May 2023

■ Norfolk and Norwich Festival

The east of England's flagship cultural festival is a brilliant combination of music, theatre, literature, visual arts, circus, dance and outdoor events.

Highlights include Vincent Gambini's 'This is not a magic show', the Ragroof Tea Dance at

the Spiegeltent (1) and Action Hero's 'Oh Europa!', about travels across Europe in a camper (2).

Events across the region are individually priced, with a large number of free performances.

📧 nnfestival.org.uk

Stay at Norwich C&CC Site

📧 www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk

2



Paul Blakemore

20-28 May 2023

■ Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival

This region-wide cultural festival prides itself on offering some of the UK's most remote rural areas the chance to enjoy world-class performing arts.

Catch a performance of the brilliant 'Hebridean Treasure: Lost and Found', which blends song, dance and storytelling with live Scottish and South Asian music, or share a laugh with Scotland's favourite Kilty Pleasure, Craig Hill.

All events at the festival are individually priced.

📧 dgartsfestival.org.uk

Stay at Newbridge Country Park

📧 newbridgecountrypark.co.uk

3



Chris Athanasios

25 May - 4 June 2023

■ **Hay Festival**

Based in the iconic 'booktown' of Hay-on-Wye, in Powys, Wales, Hay is among the UK's leading literature and arts festivals (3), with guest speakers at this year's event including journalist and former Downing Street press officer Alastair Campbell, famed adventurer Bear Grylls and joint chief curator of Historic Royal Palaces and chief executive of the Heritage Education Trust, Tracy Borman.

The festival takes place at Dairy Meadows, a five-minute walk from the centre of Hay.

It's free to enter the festival site, but you will need to book individual tickets for each of the events you attend.

📧 hayfestival.com

Stay at Hay-on-Wye Caravan Park

📧 hillandale.co.uk/our-parks/hay-wye-caravan-park

26-28 May 2023

■ **Bluegrass Omagh**

The Appalachian Mountains will be coming to Omagh and the Ulster American Folk Park, in the shape of this celebration of bluegrass music, a nod to the many emigrants from Northern Ireland who made their home in Appalachia, in the eastern US.

A fabulously eclectic line-up includes The Honey Dewdrops, from Baltimore in Maryland, Truffle Valley Boys, from Italy, and Blue Grass Boogiemen, from the Netherlands.

Choose from a range of ticket types, including weekend passes, one-day and family tickets.

📧 ulsteramericanfolkpark.org/whats-on/bluegrass-omagh-2023

Stay at Glenpark Caravan Park

📧 glenparkestate.com

27-29 May 2023

■ **WalkFest 2023**

This popular walking festival, which is designated this year as a special celebration of 2023's Year of the Coast, provides an excellent programme of guided, themed walks, including parts of the 110-mile Cleveland Way National Trail.

Walks planned for this year's event include the following

4



30 June - 2 July 2023

■ **Love Supreme Jazz Festival**

Looking ahead to late June, the Love Supreme Jazz Festival (4) is returning to Glynde Place in East Sussex, and has announced a prestige line-up for this year's event, including headliners Little Simz and the glorious Grace Jones (5).

Other artists due to take the stage are four-time Brit Award winner Emeli Sandé, multi-instrumentalist *extraordinaire* FKJ, drummer and bandleader Yussef Dayes, and one of the most celebrated jazz musicians of all time, Courtney Pine CBE.

Tickets for the event start at £63 (with a choice of day, weekend, camping, Supremium and glamping tickets available), and there is a special Live-In vehicle area, specifically for those who wish to bring their own motorhome, campervan or other 'live-in' vehicle.

📧 lovesupremefestival.com



scenic routes: Whitby Abbey (6) to Ravenscar (10.25 miles), Robin Hood's Bay to Sandsend (10 miles) and Saltburn to Staithes (nine miles). Tickets cost £8 per walk.

📧 northyorkmoors.org.uk/visiting/enjoy-outdoors/walking/walking-festival

Stay at North Yorkshire Moors CAMC Campsite

📧 caravanclub.co.uk

27-29 May 2023

■ **1940s Weekend**

Enjoy a trip down memory lane as the East Lancashire Railway heritage line hosts a brilliant 1940s-themed weekend.

The full programme of events is still to be announced, but you can expect to be able to enjoy the great music of the era, living history displays and plenty of glamorous period fashion.

If you want to get yourselves fully 'in the mood' for the event, you could also download and submit a Re-enactor Application Form and/or the Vehicle Display Form. Tickets to the festival cost from £16.50 to £89.50.

📧 eastlancsrailway.org.uk/events-activities/1940s-weekend

Stay at Burrs Country Park CAMC Campsite

📧 caravanclub.co.uk



25 May New issue of **Practical Motorhome** on sale!
Subscribe to have your copy delivered – see p78 for details

A TASTE OF WELSH WATER

Meandering rivers, coastal castles and mountain walks provide Susan Taylor with plenty to enjoy on a tour of North Wales



Duration

Six nights

When

September 2022

Why?

To explore the North Wales coastline, countryside, towns and heritage

1 Snowdonia is renowned for its picturesque lakes and beautiful rivers

2 Sue at Aber Falls, which is accessible by a variety of trails, some challenging, others less so

Wales is famously a land of castles – and not only those built of stone, which have stood the test of time for centuries, but also far more temporary constructions, made of sand and washed away by the rippling tide.

On a visit to its spectacularly beautiful north, I also discovered that this is a land of water (and railways, but that's a story for another day) – from the sea demolishing those sandy structures, to the moats surrounding the castles of stone, and from the gently meandering rivers to the wildly cascading waterfalls.

Caernarfon cobbles

We started our Welsh trip at the small, friendly Is-Helen Farm Caravan Park in Caernarfon, a convenient 20-minute walk from town via the Aber Swing Bridge (whose gates are locked at 11pm prompt, no exceptions) over the first of the several rivers that we encountered – the Seiont – which brings you right to the doors of one of those hugely impressive castles.

Despite the persistent rain (yes, I can confirm, Wales is definitely a land of water!), we were keen to get our first taste of Caernarfon, so we quickly settled on our pitch, donned waterproof gear and set off to explore.

A bustling market town with narrow cobbled streets, built around a beautiful natural harbour, Caernarfon also provides splendid views over the mighty Menai Strait.

Standing admiring this view, I could imagine the scene on a warm summer day, with seagulls wheeling overhead and children crabbing or enjoying an ice cream.

Today it was just damp! But nevertheless, we spent a happy afternoon wandering around the



streets, shops and castle. One of Edward I's Iron Ring of fortifications (which have UNESCO World Heritage status), Caernarfon Castle was built some time around 1283. Its ideal location, overlooking land and sea, meant it was intended as a home for the Prince of Wales – Edward's son, the first Prince of Wales, was born here.

It remains the site of investiture ceremonies for each new Prince of Wales. Today, Charles's kneeling stool and Elizabeth II's throne are on display in the Chamberlain Tower, while the Queen's Tower also houses the Museum of the Royal Welch Fusiliers.

We found more history when we stopped for liquid refreshment. Thought to date from 1522, the Black Boy Inn is one of the oldest hostleries in North Wales, with walls over a metre thick in places, and beamed ceilings.

No dogs are allowed in the main building, but we (and our dog, Willow) were already pretty wet after our long walk, so we didn't mind sheltering under an umbrella in the beer garden while we indulged in a real ale (made with Welsh water!).



3



For more leisurely sightseeing opportunities, the heritage Welsh Highland Railway connects Caernarfon with Porthmadog.

Alternatively, the Ffestiniog Railway will take you to Beddgelert, but we were wet and weary, and retreated to the warmth of our 'van to dry off and plan the next day's outing over dinner. There is so much to see and do in this part of the world, we knew we wouldn't be able to fit it all in, so we had some tough choices to make.

Historic castles

For starters, there are many gorgeous beaches within reach, but for now they were off our itinerary – better to save them for another, sunnier, time. Then there are all of those castles, towns and villages to choose from.

In the end, we decided to go for Conwy, which also gave us another of Edward's castles to explore, and at the other end of the scale, the Smallest House in Great Britain, aka Quay House. In this intriguing building that's just six feet wide, the front door is positively tiny.

With its cobbled streets and town walls (watch for steep steps in places), Conwy is a medieval delight and although we didn't have time to take a boat trip or explore the beaches (next time!), we had a great day out.

It included an excellent lunch at The Mulberry, on the marina, strolling around the harbour and chatting to a local honey producer in the street market that was in full swing.

Two days of exploring had left us feeling rather weary, so we opted for another evening 'at home' with a warming casserole, a bottle of red wine and a game of Uno before bed.

One of the reasons for basing ourselves at Caernarfon was to venture onto the nearby isle of Anglesey; so next morning, no more waiting for the rain to stop – it was time for us to drive across Robert Stephenson's superb Britannia Bridge to the historic island.

Menai Strait and Beaumaris

After a quick toilet stop (a regular essential for our four-legged friend) overlooking a stretch of the Menai Strait, we headed off to Beaumaris.

It seems we were still following in Edward's footsteps – here is yet another of his fortifications, this one rather intriguingly known as 'the greatest castle never built'.

This unfinished, yet imposing, example of glorious medieval architecture intermingles with splendid Edwardian, Georgian and Victorian buildings throughout the charming seaside town.

The pleasant seafront is lined with pastel-coloured houses on one side and a sand and shingle beach on the other. Huddled once more in our

waterproofs, we explored the shops and the pier, before stopping off for a reviving lunch of ham, eggs and chips at the dog-friendly and welcoming Liverpool Arms.

Having spent more time here than planned, it was time to move on. Driving along the coast heading north, we passed many fine beaches, including Benllech and Amlwch (Anglesey is awash with places to spend a – drier – day building sandcastles at the water's edge), before stopping off at Porth Llechog, aka Bull Bay.

Glad to have wellies with us, and happy to see an almost deserted beach to explore, we enjoyed splashing about on the shore and in rockpools 🌊

3 Beddgelert Bridge spans the Colwyn, just upstream from the River Glaslyn

4 Caernarfon Castle, one of Edward I's Iron Ring, was built around 1283



4

before having a quick stroll around Cemaes Bay, a charming spot whose main claim to fame is being the most northerly village in Wales.

We had planned to drive the full circle around Anglesey, but after spending all that time in Beaumaris, and being thoroughly soaked by the constant drizzle, we decided to save the rest of this attractive island for another trip, deeming it a most fitting place to spend a few lazy days in summer. So we turned our wheels once more towards the bridge and the mainland.

Back at Is-Helen Farm that evening, the rain finally stopped, so we walked into town to watch the sunset (I never can resist a sunset...) from the comfort of the Anglesey Arms (... or an excuse for a refreshing G&T!).

We also wanted to take a look at Doc Fictoria, aka Victoria Dock, Caernarfon's redeveloped waterfront, which we had read about before our journey. This lively part of town harks back to the days of the working harbour, and now houses a very popular creative arts centre, café and bar, cinema and restaurants.

The trail to Aber Falls

On our final day at Is-Helen Farm, the sun graced us with its presence, so we took the opportunity to visit waters of a different kind, away from the sea, and headed instead to Aber Falls, to enjoy a walk in the countryside.

There is a car park close to the falls, but the approach road is single-track in places and we were concerned it might be busy (plus we fancied a stroll), so we decided to park just outside the village of Abergwyngregyn.

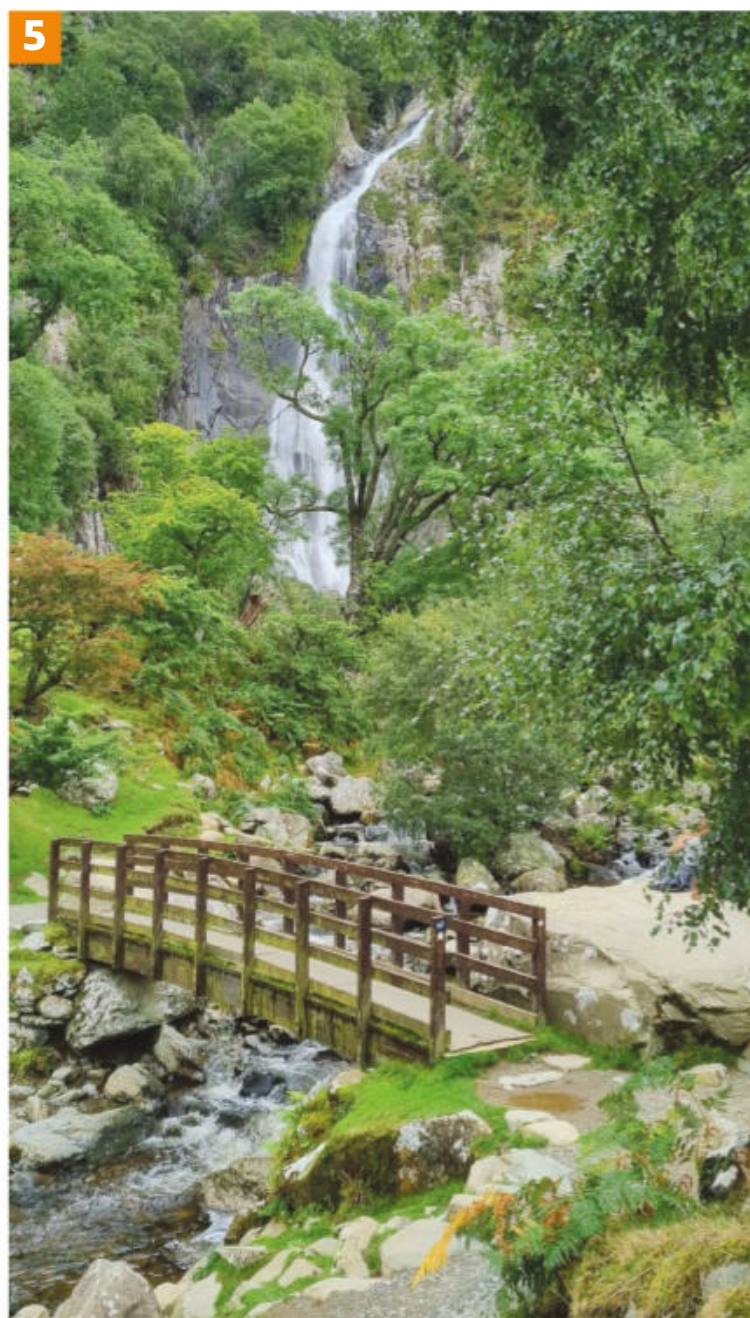
This added a pleasant mile to our walk and allowed us to stop at a village café on the way back, for a traditional Welsh rarebit (when in Wales!) – another dog-friendly establishment, where Willow was happy to be presented with a sausage by the owner.

The walk to the falls is very pretty, and gentle and accessible for most of the way, although there are some more demanding routes in the surrounding countryside if you enjoy a challenge.

There are also plenty of opportunities to stop and picnic, but I imagine it gets rather busy in the summer months. That day, we had a perfect afternoon stroll, surrounded by lovely views that were made even better by the welcome autumn sunshine.

Then it was time for us to leave the coast and head inland. Our second base was Riverside Touring Park in Betws-y-Coed, a five-minute stroll along another river (and past a graveyard!) or over the railway bridge to the centre of town.

The site was less than an hour's drive from Caernarfon, so on the way we decided to take in Rhyd-Ddu, one of the starting points for walks to the summit of Snowdon and a station on the Welsh Highland Railway.



Although we love walking, climbing the mountain would have been a step too far for us these days, so we contented ourselves with admiring the truly breathtaking landscape from ground level, before continuing to Beddgelert.

The drive, although short, took us through some of the most beautiful and varied scenery to be found in Wales, from majestic mountains to crystal-clear lakes.

Beddgelert is now added to our list of places worth a longer stay – surrounded by all that fantastic natural beauty and with two rivers meeting in the village, this is a perfect base for enjoying the great outdoors at its best.

It also boasts a train station on the Welsh Highland Railway (the views during a steam train journey must be spectacular) and a historic copper mine to delve into, as well as a couple of friendly-looking pubs and cafés. However, we decided not to stop, but drove on to the campsite that would be our home for the next few nights.

We arrived at Riverside Touring Park late that afternoon, tired but happy, and ready to rest up for a couple of days.

Woodland walking

The Welsh word *Coed* means wood and the charming village of Betws-y-Coed is indeed



5 The footbridge below Aber Falls

6 Ro and Willow stop to admire the lush green scenery

7 Beddgelert has a station on the Welsh Highland Railway heritage line

8 The delightful beer garden at Y Stablau, in Betws-y-Coed

9 Riverside Touring Park makes a great base for exploring the surroundings



surrounded by woodland, intersected by rivers, making for a scenic location and a lovely contrast to the coastline we had just left.

With interesting gift, craft and outdoor shops to wander around, as well as the Conwy Valley Railway Museum and the much photographed Pont-y-Pair bridge (built in 1468), there was plenty to occupy us in town next day.

Having passed the Y Stablau restaurant several times and noticed that the tables were always occupied, we decided to try there for dinner. We weren't disappointed, either – the local Welsh steak pies were delicious, and Willow was made welcome indoors as day turned into evening.

Hiking on forest trails

Glorious Snowdonia National Park offers plenty of opportunities for adventure, with everything from zip-lining to mountain biking, dryland tobogganing to exploring underground, although next day, we were happy simply to stretch our legs on a scenic woodland walk.

With no fewer than 14 forest trails, we were spoilt for choice, opting for a route beside the river (more of that Welsh water!) and along a section of the 83-mile Snowdonia Slate Trail, which starts and finishes at Bangor.

Good choice, as we were treated to the fleeting sight of a gorgeous kingfisher, and a much longer encounter with an elegant heron, who we spotted waiting patiently for his lunch.

Back in town later, we stopped for a drink at Y Stablau, before enjoying pizza and beer (and more sausage for Willow) at Hangin' Pizzeria. This family-run operation is focused very much on sustainability and conservation work, and their dishes are all palm oil free.

Next morning, we partook of a delicious and fortifying breakfast at the Conwy Falls Café, only five minutes from the campsite. From the café, you can walk among ancient woods in a Site of Special Scientific Interest to the waterfall, but for us, it was time to start for home.

This corner of Britain is small, but it is beautiful, diverse and packed with interest. On this brief tour, we barely scratched the surface of the many good things it has to offer visitors, and now we can't wait to return and explore further. ■

TOUR ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO GO

We toured in early September 2022, to enjoy the autumn sun – but don't forget to take your waterproofs!

WHERE WE STAYED

■ Is-Helen Farm Caravan Park

Caernarfon LL54 5RN

Tel 01286 678 497

is-helen-farm-caravan-park.business.site

Open 1 March to 31 October

Pitches 16

Price From £25

■ Riverside Touring Park

Old Church Road, Betws-y-Coed LL24 0AL

Tel 01690 710 310

morris-leisure.co.uk/caravan-parks/riverside-betws-y-coed.htm

Open 17 February to 3 January

Pitches 59

Price From £27.50

FOOD AND DRINK

■ Black Boy Inn Caernarfon

black-boy-inn.com

■ The Mulberry Conwy

mulberryconwy.pub

■ Liverpool Arms Beaumaris

liverpoolarms.co.uk

■ Anglesey Arms

anglesey-arms.business.site

■ Y Stablau Betws-y-Coed

ystablau.com

■ Hangin' Pizzeria Betws-y-Coed

hanginpizzeria.co.uk

■ Conwy Falls Café

www.conwyfalls.com

FIND OUT MORE

■ Caernarfon

caernarfon.com

■ Caernarfon Castle

cadw.gov.wales

■ Conwy

conwy.com

■ Anglesey

visitanglesey.co.uk

■ Aber Falls

abergwynngregyn.org.uk

■ Snowdonia National Park

snowdonia.gov.wales

■ Betws-y-Coed

visitbetwsycoed.co.uk





THE BEST OF MIDDLE ENGLAND

A tour in the Midlands affords Andria Massey the chance to rediscover some old favourites



Having been fans of Morse and Lewis since watching both series on TV, my housemate Pearl and I have always admired the fine architecture of Oxford. So for our first trip of the season, we planned a tour including the city.

We also wanted to visit Stratford-upon-Avon, so we looked for a campsite that would make a good base for exploring the two places. Chipping Norton Camping and Caravanning Club Site, almost equidistant from both, proved ideal.

A leisurely drive to the site

The campsite is a comparatively easy reach from our home in North Wales, so after a leisurely drive, we were soon set up on our pitch.

We prefer to use public transport when possible, leaving our motorhome on site, so next morning, we walked to the pretty village of Chadlington (just under a mile away), to catch the bus into Chipping Norton. There, we could also check the bus times for Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Soon after, we arrived in this lovely town, in the heart of the Cotswolds. We wandered through a busy street market, to the magnificent Grade II* listed Town Hall. Designed by George Stanley Repton in the Palladian style, it was built in 1842 and is now a lively events venue.

Chipping Norton has a long history, beginning with a small settlement below the hill, where the earthworks of a motte and bailey castle, dating from some time after 1066, can still be seen.

The parish church, dedicated to St Mary, stands on the hill by the castle, with parts of the building dating back to the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries. The splendid nave was largely rebuilt in 1485, with a fine Perpendicular Gothic clerestory, thought to have been funded by wealthy local wool merchant John Ashfield.

St Mary's is an excellent example of the 'wool churches' that are often found in the Cotswolds, which were financed mainly by donations from traders and farmers who had grown rich in the medieval wool trade.

The nearby Chipping Norton Theatre, a busy local cultural centre, began life as a Salvation Army Citadel, with the first stones, which are still visible in the auditorium, laid in 1888.

It later became a furniture warehouse, until two members of the Royal Shakespeare Company began fundraising for a new theatre in 1973.

The 214-seat auditorium was opened in 1975 by Tom Baker (of Dr Who fame), and these days hosts a range of arts and entertainment. Chipping Norton also runs festivals of music and literature.



Duration

Four nights

When

April 2022

Why?

Historic cities and good walking in lush landscapes

‘We walked along Broad Street and past beautiful Balliol College, with rows of bicycles parked outside’



Ancient stone circle

It was time for lunch, so we stopped at Whistlers, a welcoming restaurant in Middle Row serving a good menu based mainly on local produce.

Later, we headed off to our next destination, The Rollright Stones, an imposing stone circle 4km north of the town, part of an important complex of three Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments, not far from the charming little village of Long Compton.

The three ancient monuments are The King's Men (a stone circle) and the Whispering Knights (a burial chamber), sited in Oxfordshire, and the King Stone (a standing stone), in Warwickshire.

These mysterious structures date from different periods of prehistory, but all are understood to be representative of ancient rituals.

After a long day of exploring, we headed back to the campsite to enjoy a quiet evening.

The following morning, we headed for Chipping Campden and the bus to Oxford, a journey taking about an hour. Our arrival in the city coincided with coffee time. As a university city, Oxford has plenty of choice for good food and drink, and we decided on the Yellow Submarine, in Park End Street. Later, we set off to explore the historic buildings linked to the great university.

Our first stop was the beautiful cathedral of Christ Church, where we strolled around the Cloister Garden, dating from medieval times and once planted with a chamomile lawn, cowslips, medicinal herbs and other plants commemorating the Virgin Mary.

After falling into decay in modern times, the garden was redesigned in a simpler style in 2008, with new paving stones, a lavender-edged lawn, a planter inscribed with “The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations”, from the Book of Revelation, an olive tree and a fountain.

College and cathedral

The splendid cathedral, once part of the Priory of St Frideswide, dates back to 1122. Entering the building, which is one of the smallest cathedrals in the Church of England, you still can't help but marvel at its magnificent vaulted ceiling.

Later, we walked along Broad Street and past beautiful Balliol College, a classic sight with rows of bicycles parked outside.

One of Oxford's oldest colleges, it was founded around 1263 by John de Balliol, a landowner from



1 The Head of the River, Folly Bridge, is a very popular Oxford hostelry

2 Victorian poet Matthew Arnold famously called Oxford “the city of dreaming spires”

3 Tom Tower, the entrance to Christ Church College

4



5



County Durham, and after his death, supported by his widow, Devorgilla of Galloway.

Walking down St Aldates, we soon came to Folly Bridge and The Head of the River, a hugely popular hostelry in a charming setting beside the River Isis. Turning east off St Aldates, we passed the War Memorial Garden, established in 1925 as a tribute to Oxford people who lost their lives during World War I.

The splendid Broad Walk leads to the northern edge of Christ Church Meadows, where you can see Christ Church College to the north and a fine view of the famous Tom Tower, above its main entrance in St Aldates.

We wandered back past Tom Tower, named after its bell, Great Tom, and built by Christopher Wren in 1681–82. The tower is over Tom Gate, the main entrance of Christ Church College, which leads to Tom Quad.

Feeding mind and body

Having worked up a good appetite, we enjoyed lunch at Polish Kitchen on Rose Hill, which serves well-priced food in a welcoming environment.

Suitably refreshed, we continued on our way, passing Brasenose College on the High Street. This institution began life as Brasenose Hall in the 13th century, becoming a college in 1509.

It was originally founded by lawyer Sir Richard Sutton and William Smyth, the Bishop of Lincoln. The fine chapel and library were added during the mid 17th century and the elegant quadrangle in the late 19th century.

We decided to climb the 127 steps in the tower of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, passing the Clore Library and the historic bell chamber on the way up the stairs.

If you can manage the climb, it is well worth the effort – from the top, there are marvellous views, particularly down to All Souls, the college that is unique for automatically making all of its members fellows (full members of the governing body). This means it has no undergraduates.

The next building we came to was the instantly recognisable Radcliffe Camera, which was built in the 18th century by James Gibbs. This stunning edifice is England's earliest example of a circular reading room, and these days forms part of the Bodleian Library, one of Europe's oldest libraries.

Passing another landmark, Hertford Bridge, also known as The Bridge of Sighs, we paused to admire this famed 'skyway' connecting parts of Hertford College over New College Lane.

Nearby, we stopped at another iconic Oxford sight, the 17th-century Sheldonian Theatre, with its octagonal cupola, by Christopher Wren.

Our final visit after a busy day's exploring was to Trinity College, founded in 1555 by Sir Thomas Pope. Officially known as 'The College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity in the University of Oxford, of the foundation of Sir Thomas Pope (Knight)', the title is thankfully shortened these days.

Trinity College was built on land acquired after the abolition of Durham College, formerly home to an order of Benedictine monks, during the dissolution of the monasteries.

Later, following a satisfying day of wandering, we headed off to catch the bus back to the site. We could see why Oxford was described (by poet Matthew Arnold) as "the city of dreaming spires".

Historic Stratford

Our final day was spent in Stratford-upon-Avon, again travelling by bus from Chadlington.

Arriving in this beautiful and historic town, we headed for Bancroft Gardens, a charming spot beside the River Avon and in front of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

Here among the lawns and flowerbeds are fine statues, including, of course, one of Shakespeare and four of his greatest characters – Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, Falstaff and Prince Hal – symbolising philosophy, tragedy, comedy and history.

The work of artist and sculptor Lord Ronald Gower, the sculptures were presented to the town in 1888.

Leading from the gardens are bridges, which we used to access the Canal Basin. Stratford-upon-Avon Canal runs

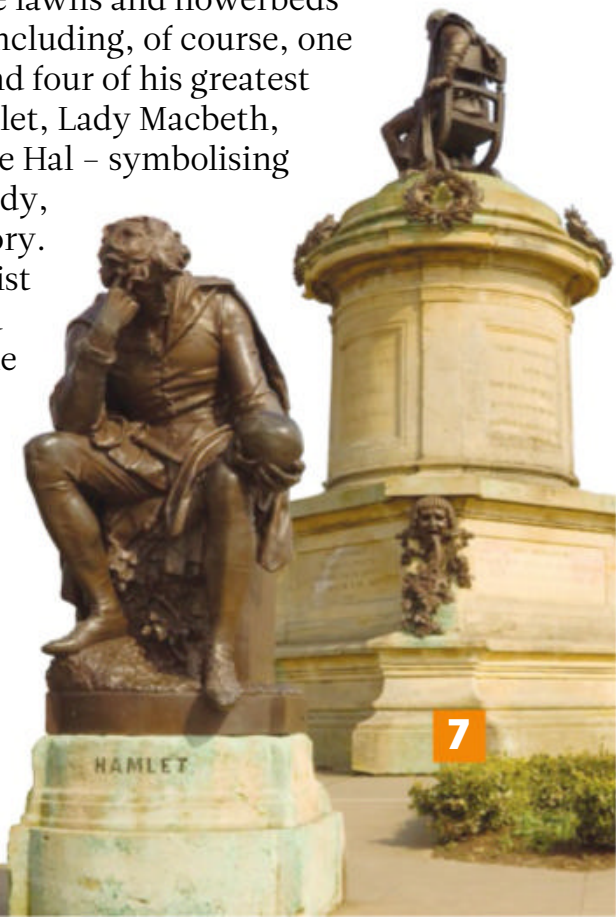
4 Shakespeare was born in this house on Henley Street

5 The famed Royal Shakespeare Theatre

6 The Canal Basin can be accessed via the two bridges that lead from beautiful Bancroft Gardens...

7 ... where the commemorative statues include the Bard and Hamlet

7



6



‘The Stratford-upon-Avon Canal runs some 25 miles through beautiful country to the Birmingham suburbs’

some 25 miles through beautiful countryside to the Birmingham suburbs.

In need of coffee, we strolled over to Sheep Street and Fourteas, a delightful 1940s-styled tearoom. We walked back along Waterside, passing the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

In the Old Town, you can visit Holy Trinity Church, the Grade I listed parish church where Shakespeare is buried beside his widow Anne and other members of his family, including his daughter Susanna, and her husband, John Hall.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in nearby Henley Street, in a now very beautifully restored half-timbered house, the third in a family of eight children. His father, John, was elected mayor of the town in 1568, which offered young William the opportunity to attend the local grammar school, a privileged beginning.

In 1582, William married Anne Hathaway, living in the house now known as Shakespeare’s New Place until his death in 1616.

The house remained a family home until 1846, when it was put up for sale. Following a campaign supported by Charles Dickens, the building was acquired in 1847 by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, which maintains it to this day.

Heading for home

Later on, looking for somewhere to pause for lunch, we decided to stop at St Gregory’s Hall in Henley Street, where we enjoyed a good meal in the Boston Tea Party café.

We then continued along Henley Street, and then further on, into Church Street and High Street, to admire the iconic black and white houses, several of which have historic links to the Shakespeare family.

After another hugely enjoyable visit, offering plenty of brilliant photo opportunities, we headed reluctantly for the bus, to make our way back to the campsite and then home. ■

TOUR ESSENTIALS

WHEN TO GO

We visited in April, but these are excellent all-year destinations. Oxford is quieter outside term-time, however, and Stratford-upon-Avon does get very busy in the summer.

WAY TO GO

Chipping Norton is easily accessed off the M40.

WHERE WE STAYED

■ Chipping Norton Camping and Caravanning Club Site

Chipping Norton Road,
Chadlington OX7 2PE

Tel 01603 641 993

www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk

Open 31 March to 30 October

Pitches 90

Prices (C&CC members)

From £8.55 per person per night

Set in the beautiful Cotswolds, Chipping Norton Club Site is an ideal place for a relaxing break, and makes an excellent base for exploring the surrounding countryside.

FOOD AND DRINK

■ Whistlers Restaurant

whistlersrestaurant.co.uk

■ Yellow Submarine

independentoxford.com

■ Polish Kitchen

polishkitchen.uk

■ The Fourteas

thefourteas.co.uk

■ Boston Tea Party

bostonteparty.co.uk

FIND OUT MORE

■ Visit Chipping Norton

cotswolds.com

■ The Rollright Stones

rollrightstones.co.uk

■ Visit Oxford

visitoxford.org

■ Visit Stratford-upon-Avon

visitstratforduponavon.co.uk

■ Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

welcometoskipton.com

■ Royal Shakespeare Company

rsc.org.uk

■ Pateley Bridge

pateley-bridge.com

■ Bus services

dalesbus.org/midwharfe.html

48 HOURS IN LYNDHURST

Known as the capital of the New Forest, Lyndhurst is the largest of the many pretty Hampshire villages sprinkled throughout the national park.

The village dates back to the time of the Domesday Book, when it formed part of the New Forest lands established by William the Conqueror.

Today, it's a magnet for the many visitors who come to enjoy the region's arts and culture, as well as the natural beauty of the forest.

With trains from London taking only 90 minutes to nearby Brockenhurst, it's an extremely popular holiday destination, particularly at half-term, when large numbers of visitors from across the country head there to enjoy a family break.

And why not? Wild ponies, gorgeous scenery and outdoor activities make this

a great place to get away from it all. Lyndhurst itself lies in the heart of the forest, with plenty to enjoy in the area and easy access to the many surrounding villages and attractions.

DAY 1

9am Fuelling up

Fortify yourself with a delicious New Forest breakfast at Peggy May's Café, where you could also enjoy excellent cream teas.

📍 [peggymayscafe.com](https://www.peggymayscafe.com)

10am Read all about it

Now it's a short walk to the New Forest Heritage Centre, a free museum where you can find out all about the forest in exhibitions and the library.

📍 [newforestheritage.org.uk](https://www.newforestheritage.org.uk)

11am Pedal power

Enjoy all things two-wheeled at The Woods Cyclery bike hire shop and café.



Cycling is a great way to explore



Bikes are available for daily hire from £22 (ebikes from £45). The staff can also advise on local trails.

For example, you might like to try the five-mile forest route to Bolderwood, where there is also a deer sanctuary, or longer trails such as the one to Burley, a pretty little village of thatched cottages and interesting shops.

📍 [thewoodscyclery.co.uk](https://www.thewoodscyclery.co.uk)

1.30pm Pub grub

If you do get to Burley, stop off at the Queen's Head, a fine old pub dating back to 1685 and offering a great selection of traditional pub fare.

Then if your cycle trip takes you back to Lyndhurst, The Oak Inn has a great menu, from pub faves to excellent sandwiches.

📍 [chefandbrewer.com/pubs/hampshire/queens-head](https://www.chefandbrewer.com/pubs/hampshire/queens-head)

📍 [oakinnlyndhurst.co.uk](https://www.oakinnlyndhurst.co.uk)



Charming buildings in Lyndhurst



Historic cars at Beaulieu's National Motor Museum



Beautiful heathland in
New Forest National Park

3pm Scale up

For something a little different, discover the work of the New Forest Reptile Centre, which helps to conserve and protect rare snakes and lizards, and encourages the reintroduction of these endangered species back into the wild.
🌐 forestryengland.uk/new-forest-reptile-centre

5pm Swanning around

Time for a late afternoon stroll: Swan Green Circular Walk is a 10.5km loop taking in forest, moorland and heath. You'll have the chance to see ponies along the way – and pause at the odd pub for refreshment breaks!
🌐 alltrails.com

DAY 2

9am Gourmet breakfast

With its traditional hearty breakfasts and contemporary brunches, including such delights as Italian omelettes and Eggs Blackstone, The Forage, in Lyndhurst, provides a delicious start to the day.
🌐 the-forage.co.uk

10am Break for Brock

Take a 10-minute drive to Brockenhurst (if you prefer public transport, the number 6 bus goes there), where you can explore the inviting shops and tearooms.
🌐 thenewforest.co.uk/explore/towns-and-villages/brockenhurst

12.30pm A real treat

Visiting Brockenhurst also offers you the chance of lunch at award-winning café The Retreat, where you can choose from a superb menu of soups, wraps, toasties and jacket potatoes. There's a take-away service available, too.
🌐 theretreatbrockenhurst.co.uk



Rare animals at the New
Forest Reptile Centre

2pm Pony pictures

Drive east to Hatchet Pond, where the wild ponies gather to drink, and you'll have plenty of good photo opportunities. Hatchet Pond car park is at the junction with the B3054.
🌐 forestryengland.uk/hatchet-pond

3pm Motoring magic

From Hatchet Pond, it's a short drive to the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu. Here you'll find a wide selection of vehicles and several collections, including that of the Caravan and Motorhome Club.
🌐 nationalmotormuseum.org.uk

7pm Say cheese!

After a busy day of exploring, it's time to go back to Lyndhurst and to visit Renoufs Wine Bar, where you can enjoy a fine selection of artisan cheeses and choose from a cellar of 200 wines.
🌐 renoufswinebars.co.uk

WHAT'S ON
5–9 July 2023

New Forest Folk Festival

This small, family-run music festival takes place near Romsey. Motorhomes, tents and caravans are welcome.
🌐 newforestfolkfestival.co.uk

14–16 July 2023

Lymington Seafood Festival

Boutique event bringing together the region's best artisan food and drink producers, with around 80 stands selling a great variety of seafood.
🌐 lymingtonseafoodfestival.co.uk

25–27 July 2023

New Forest & Hampshire County Show

This major agricultural event, taking place on a showground between Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst, is packed with activities and stalls.
🌐 newforestshow.co.uk

PLACES TO STAY

Black Knowl CAMC site

A superb site in a beautiful setting for Caravan and Motorhome Club members, with excellent access to a great choice of scenic New Forest walking trails.
🌐 caravanclub.co.uk

Denny Wood Campsite

Delightful forest location with heath, grassland, rivers and ancient trees. Perfect for outdoor adventures.
🌐 campingintheforest.co.uk

The Mill House

This CL (for CAMC members only) near Lyndhurst offers coarse fishing and welcomes families and pets.
🌐 caravanclub.co.uk

WHAT'S NEW?

Well, not the 'New' Forest! It actually dates back to the time of William the Conqueror, who established it as his own personal hunting forest in 1079 and named it 'Nova Foresta'. It was later recorded under that name in the Domesday Book.

Native ponies

New Forest ponies are synonymous with the national park and have lived in the area for some 2000 years. There is also evidence of them roaming here thousands of years before that. Today, some 5000 native ponies run free in the New Forest National Park, where they are often seen on open moorland, a quintessential New Forest sight.



Fast fact

The tides around Mont St-Michel can come in at a rate of 200ft per minute. Thankfully the bridge to the outcrop makes a visit very safe!

Norman CONQUEST

A week-long trip to northern France gives Peter Baber the chance to explore a unique island, quiet beaches and cultural highlights



Duration

Seven nights

When

July 2022

Why?

Discovering more of the historic attractions of northern France

The northern part of France can seem a bit over-familiar if you live in England. It's only a hop across the Channel to reach it, after all. Before last year, for example, I had been to the Normandy beaches more than once. I have been lucky enough to swim in Arromanches harbour and at Omaha beach.

I have also been more than once to see the Bayeux Tapestry, and explored Falaise castle, one of William the Conqueror's strongholds before he became William the Conqueror.

But last year, I realised there are plenty of places in the north of our nearest neighbour that I am yet to become acquainted with. So finding myself with a free week in July, I hopped aboard the DFDS ferry from Newhaven to Dieppe, eager to discover more about the region.

I had seen St Michael's Mount – the English equivalent of Mont St-Michel – from a distance during a magazine cover shoot some years ago. All I can say is that things over the water are in rather a different league.

Fortunately for motorcaravanners, there is also a great way to approach the place. You should try to arrive in the evening at the Aire de Camping

Car de Mont St-Michel, in Beauvoir. This *aire* is larger than usual and has a sandy surface, so you might while away the evening watching your neighbours playing *pétanque*, as I did.

But make sure you get up early the following morning, because there is a footpath from right outside that takes you directly to the abbey.

It is only a mile or so, and if you are lucky, the morning mist will rise to reveal the abbey straight ahead of you, with the statue of St Michael on its top glinting in the sunlight. You feel almost like a medieval pilgrim – except that the famous statue is actually a 19th-century addition.

Strategic location

There has been a religious sanctuary of some kind on this huge granulate outcrop since at least the early eighth century, when St Aubert, the bishop of Avranches, is said to have had a vision where St Michael commanded him to build an abbey.

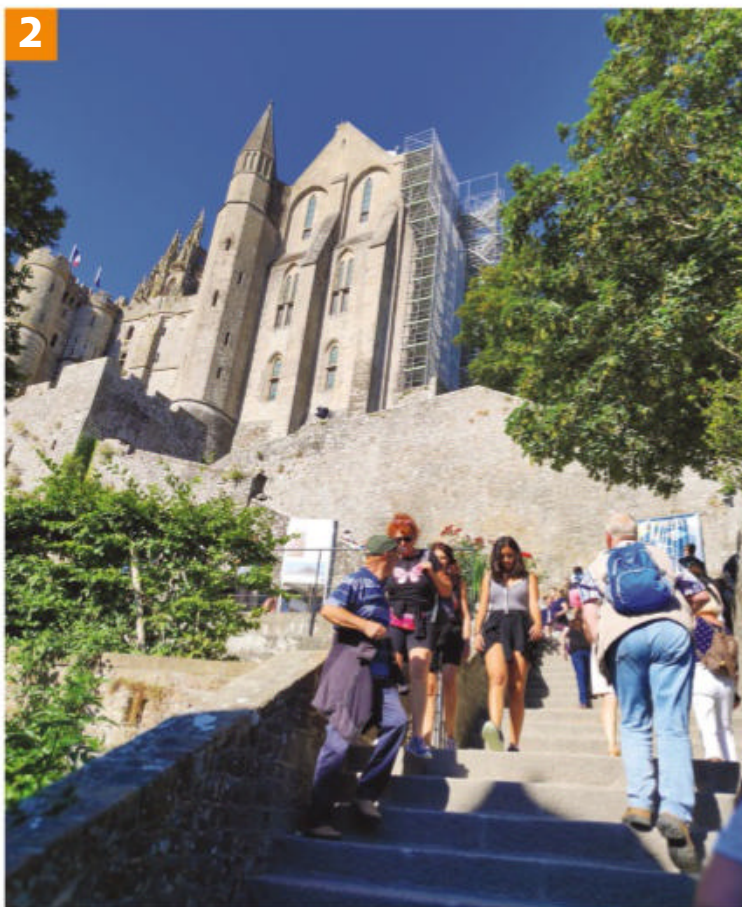
Legend has it that the rather hesitant bishop was finally prodded into action by the archangel poking him in the head (and leaving a hole in his skull, which now resides at the Saint-Gervais Basilica in Avranches).

‘There has been a religious sanctuary of some kind on this huge granulite outcrop since at least the early eighth century’



1

2



1 Mont St-Michel is now more easily accessible by bridge

2 There's a climb of some 350 steps to reach the abbey

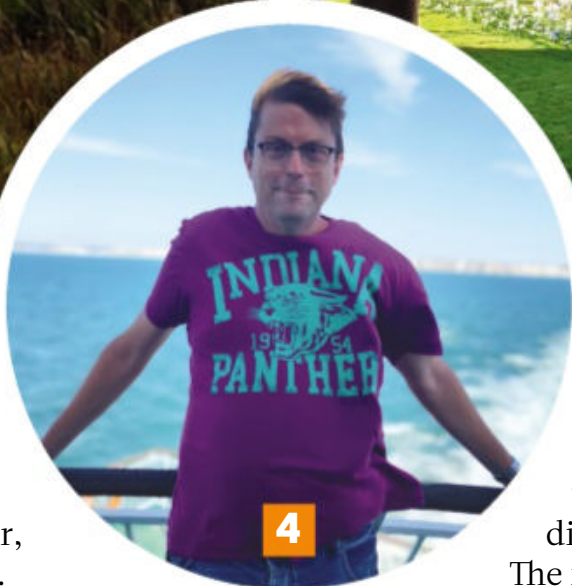
3 The charming cloister garden is a recent addition

4 Peter travelled to France on the DFDS Newhaven-Dieppe ferry route

3



4



You understand why it became such an important place when you learn that, through all the many attacks the English inflicted on the French in the Hundred Years' War, the abbey itself was never taken.

Its position, some 500m offshore at the edge of a vast bay whose tides can come in at a rate of 200ft per minute, probably helped: no besieging English knight, no matter how valiant, would have hung around here for long.

Pilgrims' progress

The canny French royal family adopted St Michael as the saint who would drive the English out of France, so it is hardly surprising that pilgrims continued flocking here to give thanks.

You can learn about this while walking along the footpath, and about the heroic efforts local engineers have recently made to stop the island becoming a peninsula, as channelling elsewhere led to silt building up.

Unfortunately, as you head onto the bridge, you soon see why starting early in the morning

is a good idea. By 9am the tourist coaches are disgorging their crowds: much of the tourism around here seems to be geared towards those disinclined to walk anywhere.

The numerous souvenir shops and crêpe stands at the foot of the island might also disappoint you. But it would be wrong to assume these are a new development: such places have been here almost as long as the abbey itself, providing refreshment and memorabilia for weary pilgrims.

In any case, they soon peter out as you climb higher through three gates to reach the abbey. One of your first rewards is the fantastic view from the terrace in front of the main church, stretching right out to sea across the *tangue* or fine sand. On the day I visited, I shared it with a tourist-savvy seagull and an alarmingly large number of heavily armed *gendarmes*. National monuments have their own risks, I guess.

Still, the interior provides a good deal of quiet respite while you marvel at the engineering feat of producing such a building, with its massive

pillars, huge vaults and delicate windows, and in such a place, too. Listen to the audio guide as you explore, and you can learn about medieval life in the abbey. I had to smile at the way the monks' Benedictine austerity was, shall we say, rather diverted as the abbey became richer and more powerful. Wine, for example, was fine, so long as it came from Burgundy – anyone caught drinking the local plonk was considered sinful.

The place still functions as a working abbey, although monks have only been permanently resettled here since 2001. The abbey was closed down at the time of the French Revolution and for the next half-century it became a prison, known as the Bastille of the Seas. Things only started improving after 1874, when it was recognised as a national monument.

A slight sense of disappointment also pervades the gorgeous cloister you come to near the end of your tour, again with a perfect view. You can marvel at the unusual pillars and the intricate carvings, but the delightful garden in the middle? It's only been there since 1965.

Nevertheless, I went back to the motorhome feeling that this was a trip well worth making.

Calvados country

So where next? Heading back east, I thought that a night in Calvados country would be the ideal choice. My original plan had been to visit Lisieux, but it was difficult to find a motorhome parking space there, and the basilica didn't seem anything like as impressive as where I had just been.

Fortunately, some of the villages nearby would happily grace a picture postcard – and especially Beuvron-en-Auge. You come around the bend in the road at the edge of this village and it is hard to believe you haven't stumbled onto a film set.

There are two eye-catching rows of colourful timbered buildings, among which you will find a handful of cafés, a *boulangerie*, a Calvados shop (*naturellement*) and even a *chocolaterie*.

Once again, motorcaravanners are well served. Just beyond the *pétanque* court and an avenue of pollarded trees, there is a very good *aire*, where the helpful woman at the nearby *bar-tabac* will take your (cash only) payment.

I whiled away a pleasant morning the next day watching chocolate fondants being made and



finding out about the various different vintages of Calvados. Staff at the nearby tourist information centre will show you how to visit local distilleries. There is even a Route du Cidre you can follow.

Heading for the coast

All too soon, it was time to move on again. I had decided I wanted to finish my French sojourn on the coast – the famous shoreline, further east from the D-Day beaches, that inspired so many French Impressionist painters.

Unluckily for me, the *aire* at Villers-sur-Mer, near Deauville, perhaps the most famous resort in the region, was fully occupied.

But it was only a short drive further east to the much bigger *aire* at Honfleur, which happened to be just two minutes' walk from the marina.

Honfleur could well be described as France's Brighton, because it is the nearest seaside resort to the capital; Paris, in this case. So as I walked among the dockside bistros and seriously chic art galleries, I wondered why it all seemed so much more upmarket (while actually being cheaper for dining out). After all, it still has plenty of shops selling tourist tat. I think the answer lies in the absence of amusement arcades.

The town has plenty of cultural connections, too. Its most famous former resident is Erik Satie, whose 'Gymnopédie No 1' you will probably have heard in countless adverts.

I am not sure I learned much more about the man himself in the Satie Museum, other than that he had an unhappy childhood, which seems to



5 Parked up under the trees near Beuvron-en-Auge...

6, 7 ... where you can stroll among colourful houses

8



9

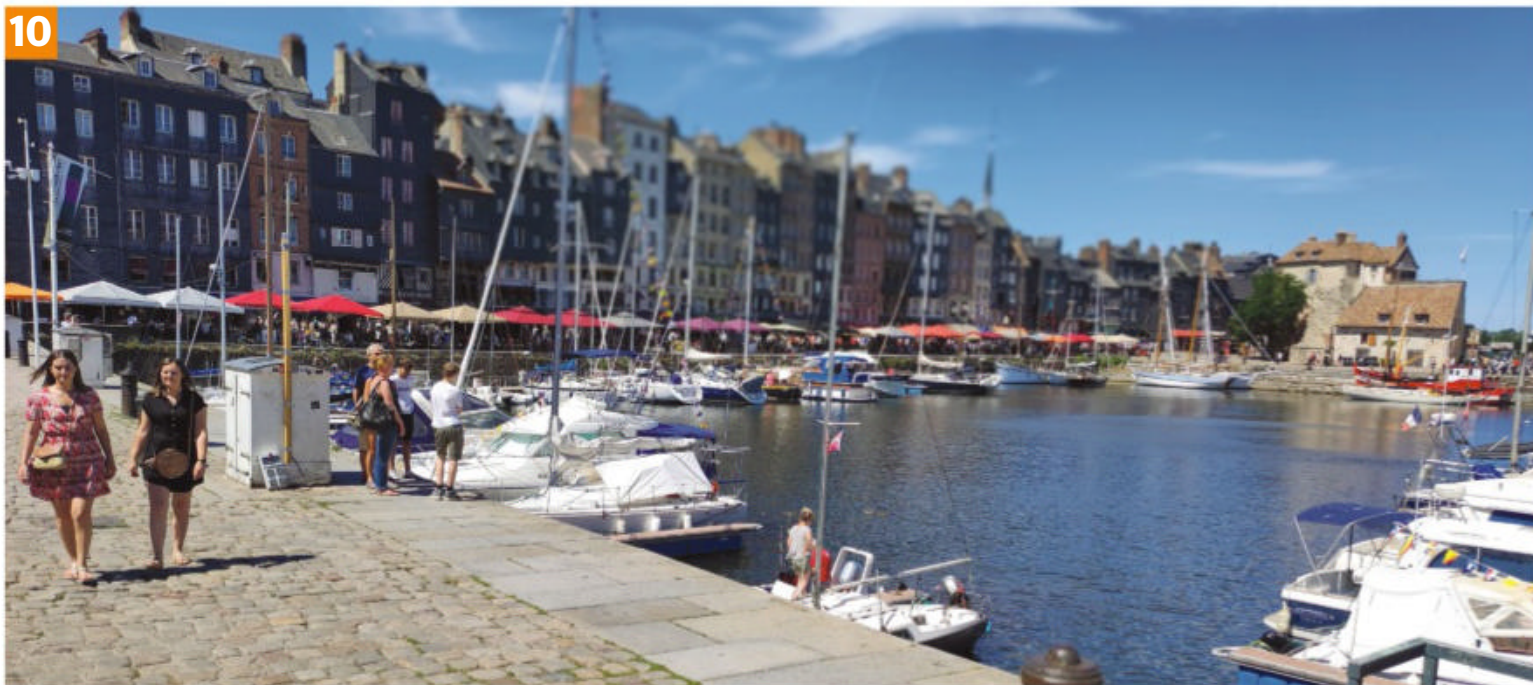


8 Honfleur's popular beach is well served with bars and cafés

9 Explore Honfleur's bustling street market...

10 ... and its upmarket dockside bistros and art galleries

10



be a prerequisite for any artist worth the name. But you can spend an entertaining hour with the various hands-on exhibits, including a surrealistic merry-go-round and a long black and white staircase that is lit only by UV light.

After that, the town's main public art gallery was a bit of a let-down. The Salle Claude Monet turned out not to have a single Monet in it, but was in fact a seminar room.

Commemorating celebrities

Venture a little further out, on the beach, and you will find the intriguing Garden of Personalities. This immaculate space features statues of all the famous people who have spent time in Honfleur. These include poet Charles Baudelaire (although he only stayed for one summer) and Françoise Sagan, who scandalised 1950s France as a teenager with her novel *Bonjour Tristesse*.

Given that each of these statues is surrounded by shrubbery made to look like a boat, with the mouth of the Seine literally feet away, I thought this was a rather touching nod to the famous types who found time to be here, even if they may have been on their way somewhere else.

And then, of course, there is the splendid beach itself. At low tide, it is apparently mud flats, but at high tide it offered miles of not too crowded golden sand, and water you could easily wade into without encountering sharp rocks. You might have to put up with a view of Le Havre docks across the water, but with a beachside bar and French pop music in the background, who needs *les tropiques*? ■

TOUR ESSENTIALS

GETTING THERE

I sailed with DFDS (www.dfds.com/en-gb) from Newhaven to Dieppe. I wanted a quicker crossing than the many hours it takes to get to St Malo, and to see more of the Normandy countryside en route, and I wasn't disappointed.

The four-hour crossing is on a modern ferry that's large enough to have a good restaurant and bar

with a fine view, but not so large that you get lost.

The ferry leaves Newhaven early in the morning, so if you will need somewhere to stay the night before, a good bet is the CAMC Brighton site, a 10-minute drive from the port. Unlike many sites, this is just about within walking distance of Brighton itself, but also backs onto the South Downs (www.caravanclub.co.uk).



10 SITES FOR LEARNING SOMETHING NEW

Whatever your interests, touring is a great opportunity to gain fresh skills, or try out new activities! Jo Davies selects some ideal destinations

WATERCOLOUR PAINTING

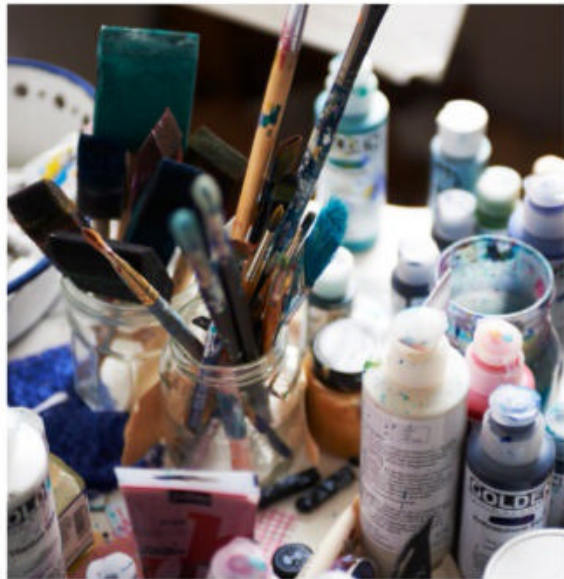
📍 waterrowpark.co.uk/painting-course

Dates 22–26 May, 26–30 June, 2–6 October 2023

Cost £210 per person **Stay at** Waterrow Touring Park

📍 waterrowpark.co.uk

Whether you're an occasional doodler or a fully fledged artist, why not extend your skills with a watercolour class? You'll get to know the basic techniques under the tutelage of local artist Kevin Middleton, with the opportunity to learn about pencil and ink drawing, too. Weather permitting, the course will be taught outdoors, in the tranquil surroundings of this adults-only site. Located on the Somerset/Devon border, Waterrow lies between Exmoor National Park and Blackdown Hills AONB, nestled in green countryside.



COUNTRY CRAFTS

📍 pegsandpitches.co.uk/beece-estate/things-to-do/country-craft-courses

Dates April–September 2023 **Cost** £38–£358

Stay at Cobbs Hill Farm 📍 cobbshillfarm.co.uk

If you're a keen eco-warrior looking for even more ways to be kind to the planet, Mantel Farm, just 1.5 miles from Cobbs Hill in the heart of East Sussex, is the place to be.

Offering a host of different activities, with the emphasis very much on sustainability, this busy smallholding can really help you get back to basics.

Visitors can learn about keeping pigs and chickens, or take a country crafts class, including basketry and willow weaving.

For net zero heroes, there are also workshops on beekeeping, and solar power. Cobbs Hill Farm is a family-run site, with a few farm animals of its own!



WHITewater RAFTING

📍 tyncornelcamping.co.uk/activities/kayaking-canoeing

Dates All year **Cost** £52–£310 **Stay at** Tyn Cornel Camping

📍 tyncornelcamping.co.uk

Sure to thrill adrenaline junkies and watersports novices alike, Tyn Cornel is just a stone's throw from challenging whitewater rapids that are considered the UK's finest.

Set in Snowdonia National Park, the National White Water Centre is a six-minute walk from this pretty campsite.

First-timers can dip their toes in, with a one-hour session of rafting down the River Tryweryn, while the more experienced can dive in headfirst and join an Ultimate Rafting group for a two-hour adventure. The waters are dam-controlled, so are consistently great, although the best time to visit is from April to October.



HORSERIDING

📍 www.bardwell-equestrian.co.uk/lessons.html

Dates 1 April – 31 October 2023 **Cost** From £23/£32 (child/adult)

Stay at Bardwell Manor 📍 bardwell-equestrian.co.uk

In a beautifully secluded corner of the Suffolk countryside, Bardwell Manor's five pitches are surrounded by sprawling fields and woodland.

The site is also home to a riding school and livery, giving people of all abilities the ideal opportunity to saddle up. New riders can take a gentle hack to the charming village of Bardwell, while more experienced equestrians will enjoy venturing out on a more varied walk, trot and canter route that takes you along the local bridleways.

If you'd like to try your hand at horseriding, but want to build up your confidence a little first, there's also a choice of lessons available.



COOKING

📍 white-pepper.co.uk

Dates One-day courses; check website for availability

Cost £180 per person

Stay at South Lytchett Manor

📍 southlytchettmanor.co.uk

If you want to add a little flair to your cooking on tour and at home, why not bake with the best at WhitePepper Cookery School? The famed academy provides courses for all abilities, from knife skills to pâtisserie, essentials to kitchen bootcamp – there's something for everyone. Courses offer expert guidance and demonstrations, with refreshments, recipe packs to take away and, best of all, no washing up! WhitePepper is just 2.5 miles from South Lytchett Manor, alongside a café, antique shop and garden centre.



YOGA

📍 www.lpcampsite.co.uk/yoga

Dates Mondays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, all year **Cost** £10 (one class), £40 (five-class pass) **Stay at** Laurel Park Campsite 📍 lpcampsite.co.uk

With the emphasis very much on mindfulness and serenity, this picturesque campsite can help you find your centre, in secluded surroundings with its own dedicated Yoga Barn.

From Hatha to Yin, there are styles and techniques of yoga to suit everyone – but if those terms are new to you, don't worry, the classes are designed to suit all levels, from newcomer to veteran.

If you really want to get into the flow of mindful movement, you might like to try a workshop, or perhaps the one-day or three-day retreats.

This family-friendly Lincolnshire park is also home to an array of farm animals that guests can meet, including goats, donkeys and chickens.



SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING

📍 ski-glenshee.co.uk

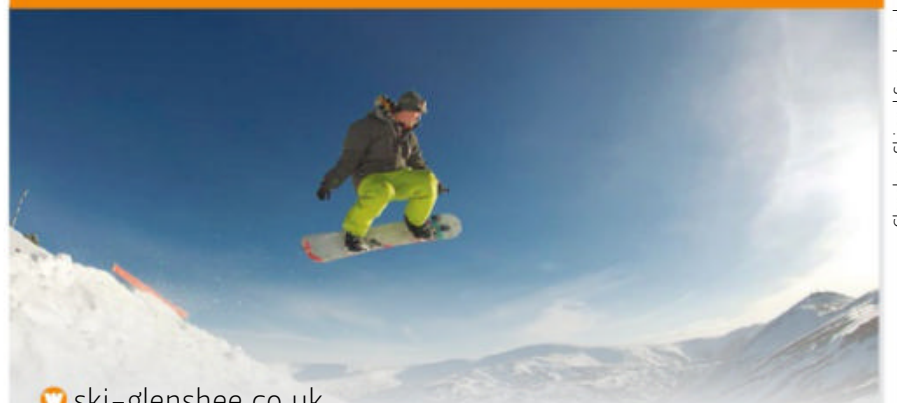
Dates Main season December to March, but depends on snow, so check website **Cost** £26/£34 (child/adult one-day pass), £21/£26 (kit hire per day), £30/£35 (two-hour lesson)

Stay at Braemar Caravan Park 📍 braemarcaravanpark.co.uk

Forget expensive trips to Europe – you can hit the slopes right here in the UK! Glenshee Ski Centre, in Cairngorms National Park, offers 2000 acres of mountain skiing with a base elevation of 650m.

Glenshee provides a range of lessons, plus beginner, intermediate and advanced skiing or snowboarding runs.

The peaceful Braemar Caravan Park, part of the Invercauld Estate, is just a 13-minute drive from those tempting slopes.



Glenshee Ski and Snowboard

ARTS AND CRAFTS



Coastal Valley

 coastalvalley.co.uk/camping/crafts
Dates Various; check website
Cost £5–£40
Stay at Coastal Valley Camp & Crafts
 www.coastalvalley.co.uk

Get crafty at this green oasis of a site, just three miles from Newquay in Cornwall. The family-run park blends seamlessly into the countryside, offering escapism along with its varied programme of activities. Workshops are run by local artists and crafters in the on-site barn. Learn to weave willow, make macramé, paint with a professional artist or dabble in aromatherapy. Children are welcome to join in, often at half price.

SURFING

 surfsouthwest.com
Dates Daily; check website for availability
Cost From £39 (two hours) **Stay at** Ruda Holiday Park
 parkdeanresorts.co.uk

If you’ve always admired those free-spirited surfers from the safety of the beach, now’s your chance to get out and experience the waves yourself! There’s no better place to learn how than Croyde Beach, one of Devon’s best stretches of coastline for surfing. Just a five-minute walk from this fabulous beach is Ruda Holiday Park, next door to the award-winning Surf South West watersports school. Beginner or expert, there’s a class for you, with individual and group lessons, intensive courses and sessions specially designed for the differently abled.



GLASSWORK

 www.driftwoodglass.com/glass-classes
Dates May to December **Cost** £30/£50 child/adult
taster course **Stay at** Deepdale Camping
 deepdalecamping.co.uk

A mere stone’s throw from the winding creeks of Scolt Head Island, in Norfolk, Deepdale Camping is a quiet haven that hosts a thriving creative hub, including workshops, market stalls and a café. Visitors can join one of the fascinating fused glass workshops, run by the specialists at nearby Driftwood Glass Studio. These laid-back sessions introduce you to the basic processes and techniques of glass fusing and give you the chance to design and make your own bowl, coaster or hanging. After the course, your work will be fired and should be ready for you to collect in a couple of days.



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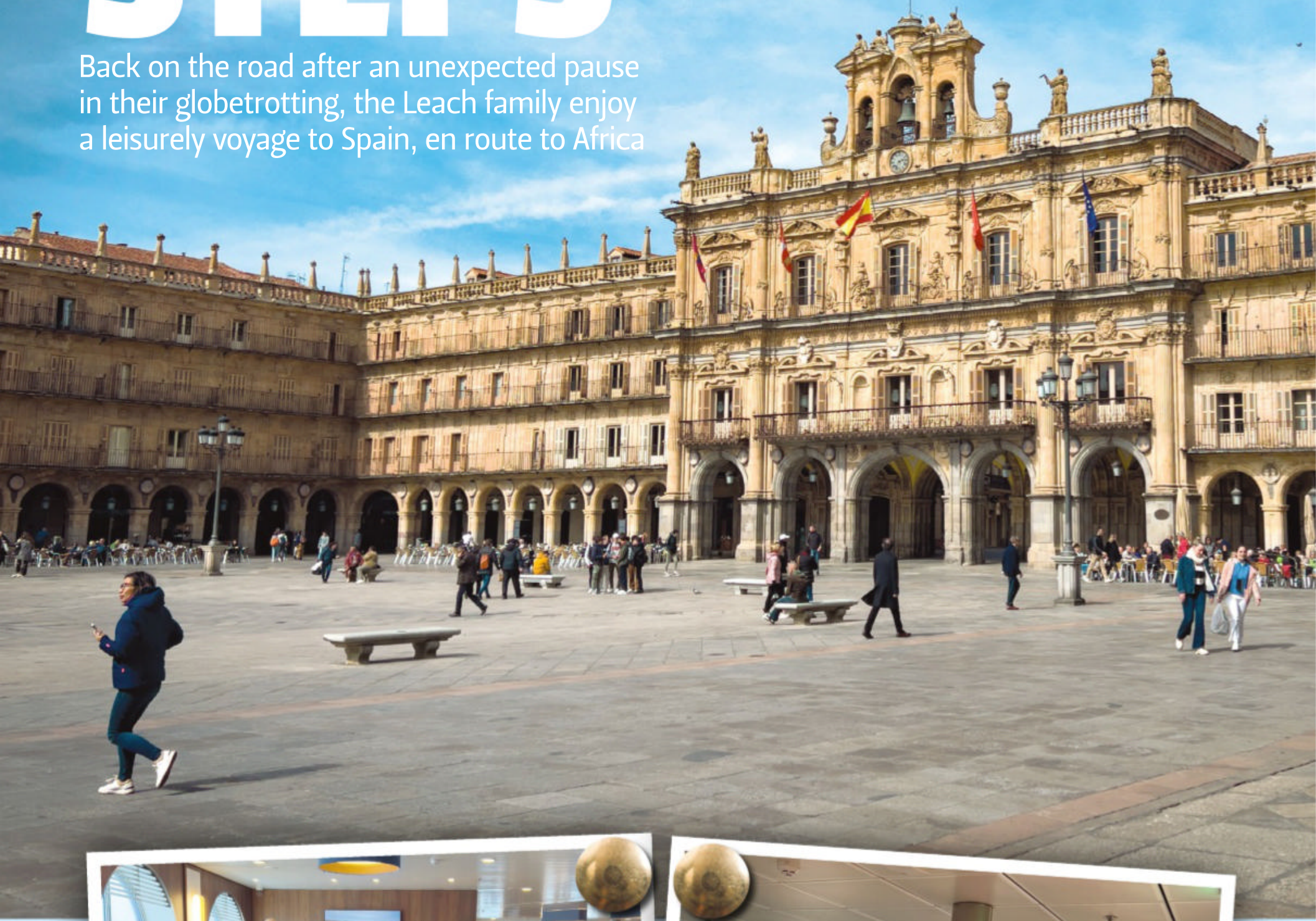


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SPANISH STEPS

Back on the road after an unexpected pause in their globetrotting, the Leach family enjoy a leisurely voyage to Spain, en route to Africa



OUR
EUROPEAN
ODYSSEY
pt 15



1



4



On 3 November 1893, the *Cabo Machichaco*, a steamship carrying over 40 tonnes of dynamite, caught fire and exploded in the Spanish port of Santander, destroying many of the surrounding buildings and claiming the lives of hundreds of people.

Thankfully, our own arrival at one of northern Spain's best known cities, aboard the splendid new Brittany Ferries vessel *Santoña*, was far less dramatic. In fact it was as peaceful as we could have wished for, the sun gently giving life to the impending day, birdsong carried through the air and a warmth that we'd really missed during our recent time back in the UK.

Driving off the ferry, there was a sense of relief at finally being back on the road, the difficulties that had derailed our travel plans for the past few months finally behind us.

We had debated whether to use the ferry, what with the new ships adding a considerable chunk of time to the crossing – it lasts 33 hours, owing to the use of a more eco-friendly fuel – but we eventually decided that being on the boat for two nights was preferable to some long driving days to get through France and back into northern Spain. Actually, far from being an endurance test, our trip was filled with fun and, for the children at least, great excitement.

Not only is there ample entertainment on board for passengers of all ages, but – most importantly as far as we are concerned – there's an excellent selection of food across several restaurants.

Sadly, there were no sightings of dolphins in the Bay of Biscay, but with calm waters for the entire voyage, we were all just happy to have arrived in Spain without a rough crossing.

Motorhome memories

Setting up camp at our first site back in Spain, the rustic but excellently equipped El Molino de Cabuérniga, I couldn't help but feel a sense of serendipity. Not only did I receive an email that morning informing me there would be no further police involvement from the road accident we were involved in at the end of last year, but we also realised we were camped just a matter of minutes from where we had stayed on our very first motorhome

adventure, in 2017. Back then, we thought a motorhome was something you bought when you retired, and we would have laughed at the suggestion our lives would pan out this way.

We've now gone from never having driven a motorhome, to living in one full-time. But that is one of life's great joys: never quite knowing what it will bring your way.

That thought continued to be true of The Big European Odyssey, now we were back on the road. First in Burgos, then in Salamanca (neither of which seem to feature highly on many visitors' Spanish touring itineraries, but both of which really should), life threw up some unexpected but truly joyous moments for us. ➡

1 Salamanca's grand Plaza Mayor, built in traditional Spanish baroque style

2 Aboard Brittany Ferries' *Santoña*, Kim enjoyed a good breakfast, while Dorothy went off to explore...

3 ... and Harrison found lots to do in the play area

4 Sunnier climes at Camping Regio, on the outskirts of Salamanca

5 Coastal views from Camping Valdevaqueros, north of Tarifa

6 Marcus and the children always enjoy a good read!

5



6



The Camino de Santiago, which runs through the heart of Burgos, is one of the world's most important routes for pilgrims. Established after the discovery of the relics of Saint James the Great at the beginning of the ninth century, it quickly became a major trail for Christian pilgrims from the 10th century onwards, and today sees more than 200,000 people a year follow this route steeped in history – and more than a few myths.

Cycling along the Camino

Given our love of exploring on foot, the Camino de Santiago had long fascinated Kim and me as a potential adventure for later in life, when the children have grown up.

As such, I really wasn't expecting to find myself exploring the stretch leading west from Burgos quite so soon, let alone on my bike. However, it turns out that not only is the Camino a famous walking trail, it is also a designated mountain bike route, and one that's perfect for gravel bikes – such as the one I travel with.

Drawn on by the omnipresent scallop shell signposts, I could easily have carried on riding all day, but for the need to get back to town in time for lunch with friends in Burgos.

The very same scallop shells from the Camino de Santiago would make another appearance – this time on the side of a building in the heart of Salamanca – as we continued on our way south.

Had it not been for a last-minute change of plan to accommodate a non-travel day, we would have bypassed Salamanca entirely, which would have been a shame. As it was, we had the pleasure of exploring this wonderful old town under warm skies and with a distinct lack of crowds.

Story of the scallop shell

Walk just a few kilometres on the Camino de Santiago and you will spot the famous scallop shell. The shell has, over many years, taken on a variety of meanings, metaphorical, practical and mythical, and is seen on all trail signs.

Of all the myths, the most common relates to the death of Saint James himself, who was martyred in Jerusalem in 44 AD. According to the legend, following his death, his body was transported back to the Iberian Peninsula on a ship that was piloted by an angel.

As the ship was approaching land, a wedding was taking place on the shore. The groom was on horseback and, seeing the ship, his horse became unsettled. Horse and rider plunged into the sea, but through miraculous intervention, they emerged from the water alive – and covered in seashells. These were the very same shells that have become synonymous with the Camino de Santiago, and can also be found adorning the Casa de las Conchas in Salamanca.





A Spanish speciality

It's impossible to visit Salamanca without walking past at least a few establishments selling all manner of pork products. And not just any pork products, but those of the famed *Jamón Ibérico*, which comes from the Black Iberian pig.

Salamanca is one of the main regions where these pigs roam free in the vast expanses of oak trees, eating a diet of acorns. If you enjoy meat, be sure to sample a few of the delights on offer, and if you're lucky enough to find *Secreto Ibérico*, then you are in for a real treat!



7 Paella combines rice, chicken and seafood in one delicious dish

8 Ornate carvings on the Catedral Vieja de Santa María, in Salamanca

The Casa de las Conchas, built by Rodrigo Arias de Maldonado, a knight of the Order of Santiago de Compostela, is decorated with more than 300 scallop shells, which are a symbol of the order.

As impressive as the facade of Maldonado's building is, it pales against the skilled craft and attention to detail seen on both the Catedral Vieja de Santa María and the Catedral Nueva.

The fine work in the carved decorations adorning both cathedrals is something to behold. Not to mention amuse, with the intriguing addition of a small astronaut among the religious carvings.

There's even a children's treasure hunt booklet available from the tourist office, to help you spot several other interesting and notable carvings.

Heading south to the sunshine

Driving south from Salamanca, the road threading through the oak trees whose acorns play a vital part in the delectable pork products to be found in many of the city's shops, there was a notable change in the air temperature.

With our route taking us through Seville and then on to Morocco, the increasing heat was a sign of things to come, even if a little unusual for us so early in the year – especially because we had spent the past two months back in the cold and damp of northern Europe.

Not that we were complaining about the need to reorganise cupboards, so summer clothes were accessible and winter ones were stowed away.

Our arrival in Seville also marked the start of our time with the Sahara Challenge – the joint venture between Bailey of Bristol and the Caravan and Motorhome Club heading into Morocco, drawn south by the allure of the Sahara Desert. It's somewhere I've been before, having spent a week with a Berber caravan, a truly incredible experience. I've been fascinated by the desert ever since reading Wilfred Thesiger's book *Arabian Sands*, and the chance to take our motorhome there was too good an opportunity to pass up.

Before that, however, there would be one final stop in southern Spain, just north of Tarifa, where we whiled away hours on the beach, mesmerised by the kitesurfers above the water.

Clearly visible on the horizon lay Africa and the promise of new adventures in our motorhome. ■



You can follow the full story of the Leach family's Big European Odyssey, not only through *Practical Motorhome* but also via their social media channels (@marcusleachglobal and @our.roaming.odyssey on Instagram, @MarcusGLEach on Twitter and @OurRoamingOdyssey on YouTube), as well as those of our Bailey of Bristol and the Caravan and Motorhome Club



Local Authority

FLEETWOOD, LANCs

Planning to visit somewhere new? Let the locals give you the lowdown. This month, a seaside gem



● Who are you?

Laura and Ian Wilkinson. We've been touring since 2000 and have travelled across the UK and Europe

several times. We live a mile away from Fleetwood, so we are only a seven-minute drive from the lively town centre and the beautiful beach.

● Why are you a local authority?

We were both born in Lancashire and retired here in 2017. We always wanted to live by the Fylde Coast and we have an excellent knowledge of Fleetwood

because we go there practically every day to shop, take a stroll along the promenade and use the amenities.

● What do you love about it?

It's a good-value town with free parking in most places, free fishing from the beach and bargains galore to be found in Fleetwood Market.

Along the promenade, there is also a good swimming pool and a gym.

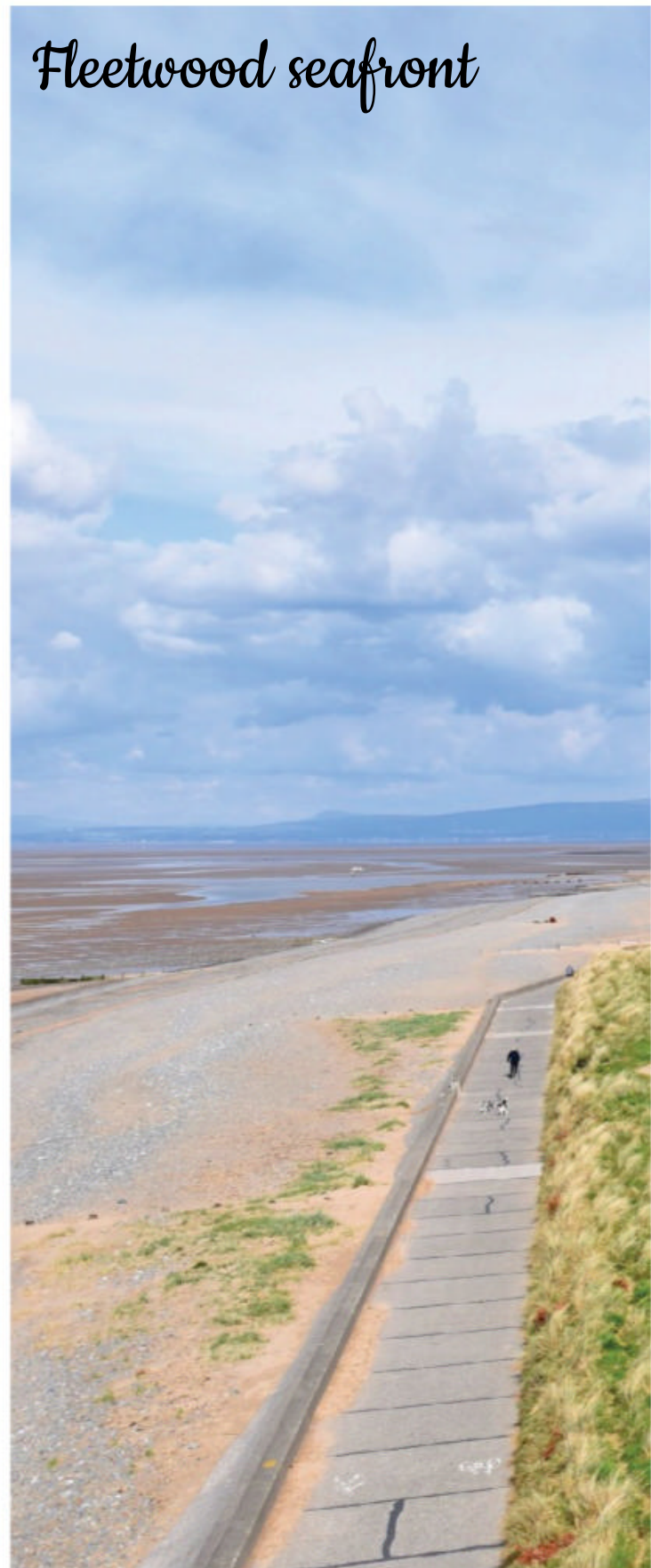
There are local bakers and butchers in the high street and the town has retained much of its grand Victorian splendour. You can see that in the sweeping, curved exterior of The North Euston Hotel, where Victoria visited when the railway came to Fleetwood.

Fleetwood Museum is well worth a visit, to learn all about the long and fascinating history of this seafaring town, and an adult ticket is only £3.

If you are visiting with children, we would also highly recommend Farmer Parrs Animal World (farmerparrs.com), at the junction of Rossall Lane (B5409) and Fleetwood Road (B5268).

They have deer, goats, pigs, cattle, sheep and llamas, and youngsters will enjoy meeting and feeding the animals. The aviary houses several species of rare fowl, too. For adults, the Agricultural Museum is a must. The café offers wonderful breakfasts, lunches and afternoon teas.

Fleetwood seafront



● What is your favourite place to visit in the area?

The coastal walk along the large, flat promenade, which is also ideal for the less able. Stroll to the sand dunes, where you should be able to spot sea holly (a protected species).

Farther along the prom, you'll find the boating lakes and you can't miss the striking Rossall Point Tower, an observation point completed in 2013. It looks as though it is about to tumble right into the sea!

Parallel to the beach is the Marine Hall, with its magnificent glass dome. As well as a thriving theatre, it houses a beautiful ballroom with afternoon dancing, and hosts food and craft festivals throughout the year.

Rossall Point Tower



Want to be our next Local Authority on the area you know well, and feature in the magazine?

‘The coastal walk along the large, flat promenade is ideal for the less able’



● Which local campsites would you recommend?

There’s a good choice of excellent campsites in the vicinity of Farmer Parrs Animal World, while for members of the Caravan Club, Beechwood Stables CL, in Thornton, offers a quiet and relaxing break.



● Tell us somewhere great to eat!

The menu is really good at The North Euston Hotel (northeustonhotel.com), or you could try The Steamer (the steamerfleetwood.foodanddrinksites.co.uk), the oldest pub in Fleetwood, which has a welcoming ambience.

The Ferry Café, on The Esplanade, has great fish and chips, but beware crafty seagulls pinching your food!

● Where can you get spare kit?

Preston Caravans & Motorhomes (prestoncm.co.uk), or Burlingham Caravans (burlinghamcaravans.co.uk).

● Where can you find the cheapest fuel?

Asda, Cop Lane, Fleetwood FY7 6NU.

● Share a highlight only the locals will know...

Visitors enjoy watching the wildlife at Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park, on the Wyre Estuary. Formerly the site of a power station, it is now 18 hectares of open space. Parking is free, and the paths are flat and suitable for prams, wheelchairs and mobility scooters.



Email us on talk@practicalmotorhome.com - we pay for every one that we print!



WELLSBRIDGE MOTORHOMES

COACHBUILTS

2019 (19) Flat Ducato Adria Coral XL 670 DK Plus 2.3TD	£63,995
6-7 berth,Auto,PAS,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,double dinette,bunk bed	
2020 (70) Flat Ducato Autotrall Tracker RB 2.3TD	£61,995
4 berth,PAS,awning,alloys,air-con,sw/seats,island bed,+Extras,One Owner	
2019 (19) Flat Ducato Swift Freestyle 674SE 2.3TD	£57,995
5 berth,PAS,awning,tow bar,c/rack,sw/seats,drop-down bed,rear U lounge	
2020 (20) Peugeot Boxer Eddis Autoquest 185 Signature 2.2TD	£54,995
2+2 berth,awning,alloys,aerial,sw/seats,2 single beds,end washroom	
2017 (67) Flat Ducato Autotrall Imala 734 2.3TD	£52,995
3 berth,PAS,awning,tow bar,solar panel,aerial,2*air-con,sw/seats,2 single beds	
2018 (18) Peugeot Boxer Bailey Advance 70-6 2.0TD	£51,995
6 berth,awning,air-con,sw/seats,rear lounge,drop-down bed over dinette	
2016 (16) Flat Ducato Pilote Essentiel P650 2.3TD	£51,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,garage,half dinette,rear bed	
2016 (16) Flat Ducato Chausson Welome 737 2.3TD	£50,995
3 berth,PAS,awning,solar panel,aerial,sw/seats,2 single beds,end washroom	
2016 (66) Peugeot Boxer Eddis Enore 254 2.2TD	£49,995
4 berth,PAS,awning,alloys,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,4 seat belts,island bed	
2017 (67) Flat Ducato Swift Escape 695 2.3TD	£49,995
4+2 berth,PAS,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,drop-down bed,bunk beds	
2012 (12) Flat Ducato Hymer Hymermobil B544 2.3TD	£49,995
4 berth,LHD,PAS,awning,c/rack,alloys,air-con,heating,sw/seats,lounge/diner	
2016 (65) Flat Ducato Autotrall Imala 730 2.3TD	£47,995
3 berth,awning,roof bars,aerial,tow bar,air-con,sw/seats,island bed	
2018 (18) Peugeot Boxer Eddis Sunseeker 115 2.0TD	£46,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,c/rack,alloys,aerial,air-con,rear kitchen & washroom	
2016 (16) Flat Ducato Swift Esprit 462 2.3TD	£45,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,heating,side kitchen,rear lounge	
2013 (63) Flat Ducato Swift Bolero 712SB 2.3TD	£45,995
2+2 berth,PAS,awning,tow bar,c/rack,sw/seats,2 single beds,end washroom	
2014 (14) Flat Ducato Bessacarr E584 2.3TD	£45,995
4 berth,Auto,PAS,awning,roof bars,aerial,sw/seats,rear bed,end washroom	
2009 (09) Flat Ducato Swift Kontiki 669 3.0TD	£43,995
4 berth,PAS>tag axle,awning,ladder,tow bar,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,island bed	
2015 (15) Flat Ducato Swift Escape 696 2.3TD	£41,995
4+2 berth,awning,c/rack,air-con,heating,cruise control,rear bunk beds	
2013 (13) Flat Ducato Bessacarr E412 2.3TD	£39,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,rear washroom & kitchen	
2011 (61) Peugeot Boxer Autosleeper Broadway 2.2TD	£39,995
4 berth,PAS,awning,tow bar,solar panel,sw/seats,rear washroom & kitchen	
2009 (09) Renault Master Adria Vision I647 SG 2.5TD	£38,995
4 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,garage,end washroom	
2011 (61) Peugeot Boxer Autosleeper Cotswold 2.2TD	£37,995
2 berth,awning,solar panel,c/rack,air-con,sw/seats,end washroom	
2012 (62) Peugeot Boxer Eddis Majestic 155 2.2TD	£36,995
4 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,rear bed,rear washroom	

2013 (13) Peugeot Boxer Eddis Autoquest Prestige 140SE 2.2TD	£36,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,air-con,rear U lounge,Special Edition	
2006 (06) Mercedes Benz Hymer Hymermobile Starline 655 2.7TD	£35,995
4 berth,Auto,awning,ladder,heating,roof air-con,sw/seats,rear bed	
2007 (57) Renault Master Adria Adriatik Vision I 707 SG 2.5TD	£34,995
4 berth,Auto,PAS,awning,aerial,sw/seats,half dinette,rear bed over garage	
2009 (09) Flat Ducato Pilote Aventura P-610 2.2TD	£34,995
3 berth,PAS,c/rack,aerial,solar panel,sw/seats,240/12V,radio/CD,rear bed	
2008 (08) Flat Ducato Autotrall Tracker EK SE 2.3TD	£31,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
2007 (07) Flat Ducato Swift Bolero 630EK 2.3TD	£31,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,rear washroom,rear kitchen	
2009 (09) Peugeot Boxer Eddis Autoquest 115 2.2TD	£29,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,c/rack,aerial,sw/seats,heating,rear kitchen & washroom	
2007 (56) Flat Ducato Autotrall Cheyenne 630 SE 2.3TD	£28,995
4 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,air-con,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
2006 (56) Ford Transit Autosleeper Amethyst 2.4TD	£28,995
4 berth,PAS,awning,ladder,aerial,240/12V,rear washroom,rear kitchen	
2007 (57) Peugeot Boxer Compass Avantgarde Suntor 120 2.2TD	£26,995
2 berth,awning,c/rack,aerial,heating,240/12V,side kitchen,rear U lounge	

HI-TOPS

2014 (64) Flat Ducato Autoorulse Rhythm by Swift 2.3TD	£46,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,alloys,air-con,sw/seats,washroom,kitchen,rear lounge	
2016 (66) VW Transporter Monte Carlo by Camper King 2.0TD	£43,995
2+2 berth,PAS,lift-up roof,awning,alloys,air-con,kitchen,rock n roll bed	
2017 (66) Volkswagen Transporter Camper-Van by Venture 2.0TD	£38,995
2+2 berth,PAS,tow bar,alloys,lift-up roof,side kitchen,upper platform	
2018 (68) Ssangyong Rodius Gran Turismo Wellhouse Leisure 2.2TD	£27,995
2+2 berth,7 Speed Auto,PAS,4WD,lift-up roof,air-con,240/12V,kitchen	
2005 (55) Renault Master Devon Monte Carlo 2.5TD	£25,995
3 berth,PAS,tow bar,solar panel,air-con,heating,side kitchen,rear lounge	
2006 (06) Flat Ducato Trigano Tribute 2.3TD	£22,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,alloys,aerial,heating,sw/seats,rear kitchen & washroom	
1999 (T) Volkswagen Transporter Autosleeper Topaz 2.4	£19,995
2 berth,PAS,awning,tow bar,sw/seats,240/12V,radio,kitchen,washroom	
2003 (53) Volkswagen Transporter Campervan Conversion 1.9TD	£19,995
2 berth,PAS,lift-up roof,tow bar,alloys,sw/seat,240/12V,radio/CD,side kitchen	
2011 (11) Mercedes Benz Vito Van Conversion 2.1TD	£15,995
2 berth,PAS,kitchen facilities,seating converts to small double bed	

Mobility Vehicle by Brook Miller Mobility Ltd.

2018 (67) Flat Ducato Liberation 2.3TD	£43,995
2 berth mobility vehicle with wheelchair lift, Automatic, tow bar, aerial, swivel seats, side kitchen, shower, rear bed.	

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**2020 (70) FIAT DUCATO
AUTOTRAIL TRACKER RB 2.3TD**

4 berth, PAS, awning, alloys,
air-con, swivel seats, island bed,
+Extras, One Owner.

£61,995



**2017 (67) FIAT DUCATO
AUTOTRAIL IMALA 734 2.3TD**

3 berth, PAS, awning, tow bar,
solar panel, aerial, 2*air-con,
swivel seats, 2 single beds.

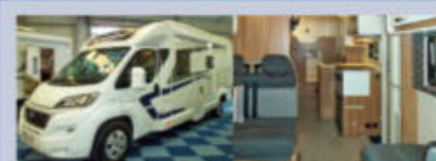
£52,995



**2016 (16) FIAT DUCATO
CHAUSSON WELCOME 737
2.3TD,**

3 berth, PAS, awning, aerial,
solar panel, swivel seats,
2 single beds, end washroom. .

£50,995



**2017 (67) FIAT DUCATO
SWIFT ESCAPE 695 2.3TD**

4+2 berth, PAS, awning, aerial,
cycle rack, air-con, sw/Seats,
drop-down bed, bunk beds.

£49,995



**2012 (12) FIAT DUCATO
HYMER HYMERMOBIL B544 2.3TD**

4 berth, LHD, PAS, awning,
cycle rack, alloys, air-con,
swivel seats, lounge/diner.

£49,995



**2018 (18) PEUGEOT BOXER
ELDDIS SUNSEEKER 115 2.0TD**

2 berth, PAS, awning, alloys,
cycle rack, aerial, air-con,
rear kitchen & washroom.

£46,995



**2014 (64) FIAT DUCATO
AUTOCRUISE RHYTHM
BY SWIFT 2.3TD**

2 berth, PAS, awning, alloys,
swivel seats, washroom,
kitchen, rear lounge.

£46,995



**2013 (63) FIAT DUCATO
SWIFT BOLERO 712SB 2.3TD**

2+2 berth, PAS, tow bar, awning,
cycle rack, aerial, swivel seats,
2 single beds, end washroom.

£45,995



**2016 (66) VOLKSWAGEN
TRANSPORTER MONTE
CARLO BY CAMPER KING 2.0TD**
2+2 berth, PAS, lift-up roof,
awning, alloys, air-con,
kitchen, rock n roll bed.

£43,995



**2018 (67) FIAT DUCATO
LIBERATION 2.3TD by
BROOK MILLER MOBILITY LTD**
Mobility vehicle with wheelchair
lift, 2 berth ,Automatic, tow bar,
aerial, swivel seats, side kitchen,
shower, rear bed.

£43,995



**2013 (13) FIAT DUCATO
BESSACARR E412 2.3TD**

2 berth, PAS, awning, cycle rack,
aerial, air-con, heating, sw/Seats,
rear washroom & kitchen.

£39,995



**2011 (61) PEUGEOT BOXER
A/SLEEPER BROADWAY 2.2TD**

4 berth, PAS, awning, tow bar,
solar panel, air-con, sw/Seats,
rear washroom & kitchen..

£39,995



**2017 (66) VW TRANSPORTER
CAMPER-VAN BY VENTURE 2.0TD**

2+2 berth, PAS, tow bar, alloys,
lift-up roof, air-con, side kitchen,
upper platform.

£38,995



**2009 (09) FIAT DUCATO
PILOTE AVENTURA P-610 2.2TD**

3 berth, PAS, solar panel, aerial,
cycle rack, swivel seats,
radio/CD, rear bed.

£34,995



**2007 (07) FIAT DUCATO
SWIFT BOLERO 630EK 2.3TD**

2 berth, PAS, cycle rack, awning,
aerial, air-con, swivel seats,
rear washroom, rear kitchen.

£31,995



**2009 (09) PEUGEOT BOXER
ELDDIS AUTOQUEST 115 2.2TD**

2 berth, PAS, cycle rack, awning,
aerial, swivel seats, heating,
rear kitchen & washroom.

£29,995



**2006 (56) FORD TRANSIT
AUTOSLEEPER AMETHYST 2.4TD**

4 berth, PAS, awning, ladder,
aerial, air-con, 240/12V,
rear washroom, rear kitchen.

£28,995



**2018 (68) SSANGYONG RODIUS
GRAN TURISMO TOURIST 2.2TD
BY WELLHOUSE LEISURE**
2+2 berth, 7 Speed Auto, PAS, 4WD,
lift-up roof, air-con, 240/12V,
kitchen facilities.

£27,995



**2003 (53) VW TRANSPORTER
CAMPERVAN CONVERSION 1.9TD**

2 berth, PAS, lift-up roof, tow bar,
alloys, swivel seat, 240/12V,
radio/CD, side kitchen.

£19,995



**2011 (11) MERCEDES BENZ
VITO VAN CONVERSION 2.1TD**

2 berth, PAS, remote locking,
kitchen facilities, seating converts
to small double bed.

£16,995



PETER BABER
Reviews editor

Sometimes a motorhome comes along that really surprises us reviewers – perhaps it has an interior packed with innovation, or a layout that’s not really been tried before. The Hymer Venture S (p68) manages to combine both: it offers a raft of clever features in a vehicle that looks as though it could take you absolutely anywhere. Okay, so it’s expensive, but it’ll be exciting to see how many of its innovations make their way through to the design of more mainstream motorhomes – after all, who wouldn’t want a sturdy sundeck on which to relax with a drink at the end of a busy day exploring? Meantime, the outlook for the rest of the industry remains promising, with news of expansion at Jerba (*see opposite*) and an intriguing project involving the iconic Morris Commercial van.

Email Peter via peter.baber@futurenet.com

Our tests explained

Here’s what you can expect from our reviews

Big tests

These are our most detailed tests – we spend at least one full day (usually more) inside each motorhome, to bring you our comprehensive verdict. The overall score is based on the opinion of multiple members of the team.

’Van reviews

Each issue we test new models of all sizes – we then report back to

you in our regular ’van reviews pages. This is the place to look for the quick low-down on a model!

Our ’vans, Our month

Practical Motorhome has numerous long-term-test vehicles – we’re loaned these by manufacturers. We treat these as if they’re our own, allowing us to give you a full, warts-and-all report over the months.

IN THIS MONTH’S SECTION

67 New ’vans

Latest from the industry

As part of a planned expansion for the firm, Jerba Campervans is basing its newest van conversion on the Volkswagen Crafter

68 ’Van review

Hymer Venture S

Rugged good looks inside and out in this distinctive four-berth



70 ’Van review

S&L Apollo

Innovative design is on display in this clever van conversion



72 New series: Global brands

Around the world in 80 ’vans

In our new series celebrating great leisure vehicles across the world, Gentleman Jack begins with iconic brands from Canada



NEW 'VANS

The latest from the forecourts and the factories

Jerba gets into Crafters

Jerba Campervans has started making its first conversions based on the VW Crafter, as it gears up for an expansion on site. The North Berwick company has already made its first new Crafter conversion, and is on to its second.

The new model is highly bespoke, and can be built on medium, long or extra-long wheelbases, between 6.0m and 7.4m in length. It includes an onboard toilet and shower.

The move into Crafters comes just after the firm won planning permission to expand its workshop as part of a £210,000 investment. This will help it increase production capacity and install a bespoke spray-painting booth – the first of its kind in Scotland.

Jerba cofounder Simon Poole said moving to the Crafter, when the firm had only converted Transporters before, was a big step. “It’s the perfect-sized van and is extremely versatile. It also has a particularly comfortable cab, which means that you can take it on longer journeys.”

Morris project wins extra funding

A company that is hoping to resurrect the Morris Commercial van from the 1950s as an electric vehicle that is ideal for conversion into a camper has won additional funding for the project.

Morris Commercial was due to show its prototype Morris JE all-electric vehicle at the Fully Charged Live show in Farnborough at the end of April.

The vehicle on display at the show will include a Slidepod, which extends from the back of the 'van when parked and can include a kitchen unit.

The Oxfordshire company has won funding from Capital for Colleagues, an investment fund specialising in employee-owned businesses.

The all-electric JE has a gross vehicle weight of 2.5t and a range of 250 miles.



1 Jerba Campervans is basing conversions on the VW Crafter...

2 ... with highly bespoke interiors

3 Morris Commercial all-electric van has huge potential for camper conversions



The new money will be invested in R&D, validation and certification, as well as production, with the first vehicles due to go on sale early next year. The first models should be going to customers later next year.

Morris Commercial's John Killick said the potential for converting the van into a camper was clear: “Around 50% of the people who see it ask if we are planning a campervan.”

Swift all set to grow

Cottingham-based motorhome and caravan manufacturer Swift is looking to expand its workforce by 200 to 1500 in the next three years – and to prepare for that, is improving staff facilities at its main site north of Hull.

The manufacturer has recently spent £2m developing Hub Sixty-Four, a large café and social space which it hopes can also be used for events and less formal training. The new facility is part of the firm's £10m investment in the site.

In brief

Hobby founder wins gong

Hobby founder Harald Striewski has won this year's German Camping Award, marking his lifetime commitment to the industry.

The award, which has been running since 1970, is organised by the German Camping Club and the city of Essen, and is announced to coincide with Essen's Reise & Camping Trade Fair.

German Camping Club president Dieter Albert said, “Harald Striewski has had more of an impact on the industry than anyone else.”

Award for workshops

Bristol Caravans and Lichfield-based mobile workshop Cara-Fix have won this year's AWS Workshop of the Year Awards.

The runners-up were Carlisle-based Macadams Caravan and Motorhome Services, and Northumbria Mobile Caravan Services, in Ashington.

HYMER VENTURE S

The price puts this distinctive new four-berth at the super-luxurious end of the market, but it will certainly turn heads, says Peter Baber

So the 'van that wowed everyone as a concept only four years ago is now a production model. We caught up with Hymer's exciting new Venture S at Travelworld in Stafford.

You immediately see why it is such a crowd puller. It looks rugged on the outside, with studded wheels, a front light bar and off-road detailing. The inflatable raising-roof and rear sun deck are enticing. Not to mention 320Ah of lithium batteries, making this a true off-road vehicle.

But what about inside? Well, there is a standard Mercedes cab, which you step down slightly into from the interior. You can control grey-waste disposal from this cab, so no need to faff around with pipes under the body.

The real innovation starts when you swivel the offside seat. Open a few cupboard doors, take out a support leg that resides in one of those cupboards, and you have a little home office, with sockets close to hand.

The lighting is clever – a spotlight for focus, and up above, space to insert a portable light that fits here or in the rear lounge and gives you more USBs.

There are some teething troubles: the desktop sits partly on an opened cupboard door, which someone coming in might be tempted to use as support. But Hymer has worked out that even motorcaravanners occasionally need to work (to pay for the vehicle in the first place, perhaps?), and this space allows you to do that.

The main lounge at the rear has a 180-degree view, with loads of light. The smart bamboo walls are enhanced by the ambient lighting, and there are more spotlights, which can be placed at different points in the bamboo.

Price £196,100

Sleeps 4

Belts 2

Base vehicle

Mercedes Sprinter

Engine 190bhp with AWD and nine-speed automatic transmission

Length/width/height

6.45/2.16/3.07m
(21'2"/7'0"/10'1")

MTPLM 4100kg

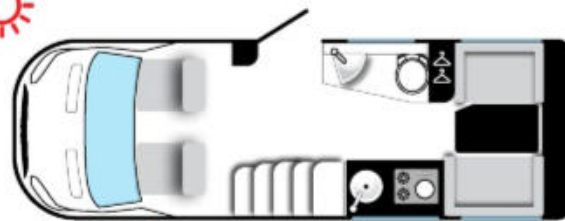
MiRO 3725kg

Payload 375kg

Water (fresh/waste) TBC

Leisure battery 320Ah

Gas 1 x 5kg



Contact Erwin Hymer Group SE **Address** Holzstraße 19, D-88339 Bad Waldsee, Germany
Web erwinhymergroup.com **Tel** +49 7524 999-0

The two settees are perhaps a touch upright, and the table, which slides out and up from under one of them, would only have space for four. But you could easily bring extra seats with you and seat more guests out on the sun deck.

Opening out the latter is easy, and from here, a little ladder takes you to the ground. With the door open, you really do get the outside coming in. But you needn't worry about critters – a large flyscreen lowers to keep them out.

It's a bit of a surprise to discover there is no microwave in the kitchen – even as an option – and you only get a two-burner gas hob. The stylish worktop is designed to resist smudges. The sink is a good size, with a wooden cover, and the half-height fridge is adequate for the food of two.

The washroom is a revelation – when it's in travelling mode, you get a deep basin with two towel hooks, a large mirror and a toilet with a step that swings out. But once you arrive on site, the washroom wall can be drawn

up close



Standard Mercedes cab, with slight step down from interior



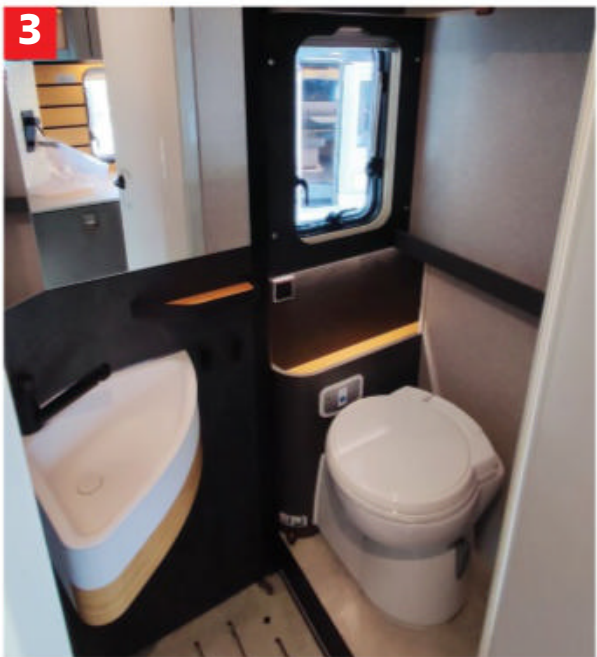
Swivel the seat, set up the desk and you have a home office



Upstairs bed has an inflatable mattress and good lighting



Smart bamboo walls with gaps to hold the movable spotlights



1 Rear sun deck really helps to bring the outside in
2 Contemporary kitchen has smudge-resistant worktop and sizeable sink with wooden cover
3 On site, the washroom wall can be drawn out and the mirror partition swung forward to reveal the opulently spacious shower cubicle

out and that mirror partition swung forward, to reveal a shower cubicle that offers amazing headroom.

From there, the upstairs bedroom is a few steps away. There's no banister, but having a staircase is a real luxury.

The mattress inflates as you raise the roof, the inflatable walls deaden noise, there is a zip-down window at the back, and up here you even get a 12V and USB-C socket. There is a hook for that portable light, too.

Another advantage of the staircase is the storage possibilities. The stairs

have three compartments inside, while underneath, there is a tall cupboard with shelves, plus four square cupboards. All have solid catches.

There is also a slim wardrobe by the rear lounge, just about large enough for the clothes of two. The underseat area is mostly taken up by the table. The office area has plenty of shelving, and there's a shelf over the cab.

The kitchen has a large overhead locker, and smaller shelves with retainers. Washroom storage is more limited, with just one locker up top.

PRACTICAL MOTORHOME SAYS...

It's amazing that a vehicle like this has come from concept to production stage so quickly. We hope some of its most innovative features, including the inflatable roof, the home office and the sun deck, make their way to more conventional motorhomes soon. For now, as long as you have the money (and you don't mind living without a microwave), enjoy it.

★★★★★



Staircase to the upstairs bedroom also offers elegant storage...



... and plenty of choice in the shelved cupboards



You'll find handy USB ports in the upstairs bedroom (including USB-C)



Partition in the washroom swings out to reveal the huge shower

S&L APOLLO

Step inside this well-planned two-berth and you immediately see the attention to detail that makes it so impressive, says Peter Baber

S&L Motorhomes is based in the same M62 corridor as a large number of van converters. You wouldn't think so, however, arriving at its isolated workshop in open country, just outside Selby.

Although the firm makes a range of layouts, it says far and away its most popular models are rear-lounges.

We were here to take a look at the Apollo, a rear-lounge 'van based on the 6.36m-long Fiat Ducato.

Outside, it looks fairly standard, although black alloys give it a lift. The Ducato cab includes air conditioning, cruise control and a Bluetooth music system as standard.

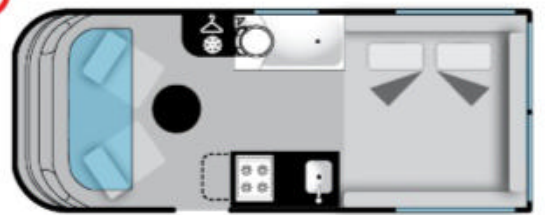
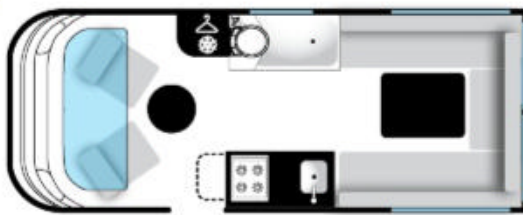
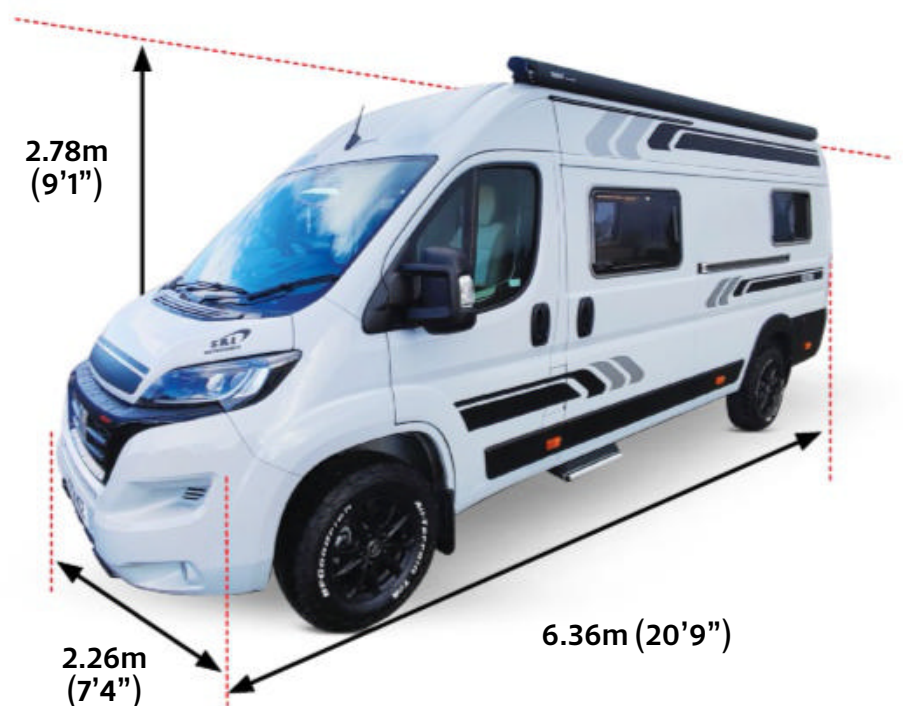
Step inside and things start to look different as you move back. Although this two-berth is a rear-lounge model, there is space and a slot up front for a small circular table, which is handily located near the kitchen.

Not only that, once you swivel the driver's seat, you'll find it's perfectly positioned for a neat desk, complete with USB, 12V and mains sockets. This area is well lit, too, thanks to an extra window the designers have managed to fit in behind the main cab window.

You have to step down and up again to reach the lounge, which is slightly irritating, especially as headroom here is a little restrictive. But this enables all water piping and hot air ducting from the Truma Combi 4E boiler to be placed within the 'van itself: you don't have to worry about exposed pipes.

The upholstery is very comfortable. You can use the round tabletop, but there is also a sturdy rectangular table, with more than enough space for two. Whichever table you use, there is still room to stretch your legs out.

Price £73,950
Sleeps 2
Belts 2
Base vehicle Fiat Ducato Series 9
Engine 2.2-litre, 140bhp
Length/width/height 6.36/2.26/2.78m (20'9"/7'4"/9'1")
MTPLM 3500kg
MiRO 3050kg
Payload 450kg
Water (fresh/waste) 90/70 litres
Leisure battery 100Ah
Gas 25-litre, underslung



Contact S&L Motorhomes **Address** Low Moor Road, Selby, North Yorkshire YO8 6EF
Web slmotorhomes.co.uk **Tel** 01757 630 233

The large windows offer great views, while four spotlights and five LEDs in the ceiling provide good night-time lighting. The TV is tucked away behind the tambour door in the front offside corner, above a shelf for the remote.

The central kitchen includes two large extensions. While the one on the left doubles as a cover for a spice rack, that on the right extends out across the door – combined with the small round table and the desk, this would provide a huge food assembly area for any gathering going on in the awning.

There are two sockets between the large sink and the three-burner gas hob. You also get a microwave above and a combined oven and grill below, with a 90-litre fridge opposite.

All S&L models can be customised, and the customer who had already bought our test model had stipulated an Omnivent in the central aisle. He also asked for a solid door, complete with towel hooks, to be included in the washroom – as standard, you only get the tambour door. Otherwise the washroom includes a bench toilet for

up close



Ducato cab includes air-con and cruise control as standard



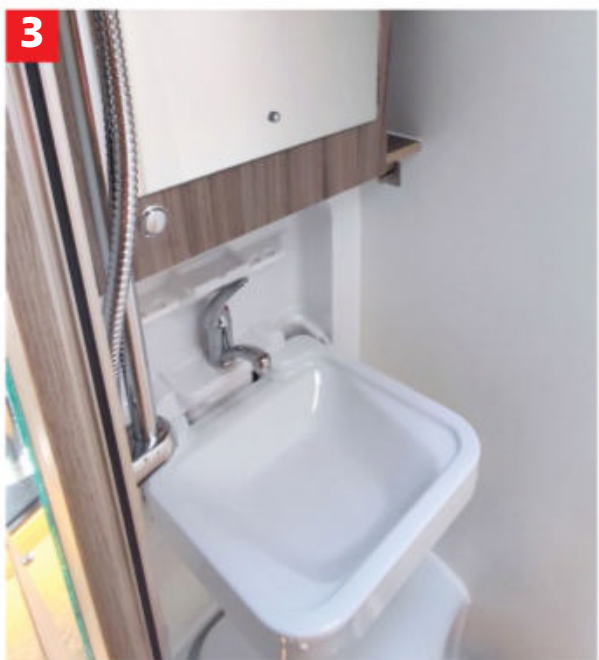
Neat little round table up front is handily located near the kitchen



'Boot' area is easily accessed via the barn doors at the rear



Bespoke design options include extra locker next to microwave



1 You can easily set up the small table or a larger, two-legged one as required **2** Kitchen is fitted with a sizeable sink and generous work surface **3** Thoughtful planning in the washroom, which offers a fold-up handbasin, along with a separate push-button showerhead

easy cleaning, beneath a fold-up basin. There's no separate shower cubicle and only one drain hole in the floor, but you do get a separate push-button showerhead. The drying rail is cleverly positioned in the curve of the wall.

The settees work as single beds, but the double is aptly described as a "ten second bed": you pull out a platform from under the offside settee, and fit in the backrests. As standard, S&L leaves a space by the kitchen that remains a seating area, which slightly limits the size of the double bed.

The wardrobe below the fridge has a slide-out hanging rail for easy loading – a real rarity in a van conversion. Overhead lockers offer good storage all around the rear lounge and above the front desk.

Our buyer opted for an extra locker by the microwave and solid drawers below, where as standard, you'd get a lightweight cupboard with shelves.

The washroom includes another cupboard, and finally, there is a small 'boot' area, which is reached through the barn doors at the back of the 'van.

PRACTICAL MOTORHOME SAYS...

Don't be put off by this being a relatively unknown brand. The Apollo might look slightly on the pricey side, but it includes some real innovations in a van conversion, particularly with the kitchen and the area up front. All of the pipework is internal, too, and the rear lounge is very comfortable.

★★★★★



Dedicated spot for TV above a shelf for stowing the remote control



Washroom has no separate shower cubicle, and there's only one drain hole



Ample storage space provided in the run of overhead lockers



Drawers in the kitchen are also a customised design choice

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 'VANS

In the first of a new series, Gentleman Jack takes a look at wonderful (and sometimes weird) motorhomes from around the globe. This issue: Canada

HERITAGE Triple E of Manitoba is the oldest volume producer of Canadian 'vans still trading. The company was started by PW Enns in 1965. Pictured below is a 1980 6.71m (22ft) Triple E Empress A-class, the first A-class designed and built in Canada. The photo was taken in one of Canada's many truly spectacular National Parks. A motorcaravanner's dream!



TRUCK CAMPERS (known as demountables in the UK) have a big following in Canada, with sales accounting for 25% of all leisure vehicles. Northern Lite produces a wide range of bodies to fit pick-up trucks. They are all very well-built and feature a strong, leak-resistant, moulded GRP body, with quality furnishings inside. The guide price in Canadian dollars is from C\$58,000 (£35,000).



ELEVATING-ROOF MOTORCARAVANS are gaining ground over traditional B-class high-top van conversions. This is a Pleasure-Way Tofino; it's really compact at just 5.41m (17' 9") long, thus eminently suitable for use as an 'only vehicle'. Pleasure-Way was started by RV dealer Merv Rumpel, who wanted a better-quality conversion to sell. The firm is based in Saskatchewan and prices its conversions in US dollars... in this case, \$94,250 (£75,500).

ROADTREK is probably the best-known Canadian RV manufacturer in the UK. Reasons for this include the vast number of them left behind by US and Canadian Forces when homeward-bound from UK bases. In addition, they were previously based on the (then) desirable US 'muscle' vans, with their signature hinged double side doors. This is a Roadtrek Play on RAM Promaster.



CANADA



Did you know?

Canada is the second largest country in the world, with an area of 3.85 million square miles and a population of more than 38.5 million people. Three out of 20 adults own an RV, and an estimated 8.8 million RV trips were made last year



CANADIAN B-CLASS MOTORHOMES were (almost) exclusively based on Chevrolet and (US) Ford vans. The RAM Promaster (basically a Fiat Ducato with a big petrol engine) changed this and now firms such as Quebec-based Safari Condo are also using the full-sized Transit, Ford's first truly global van. Pictured above is the XL Flex, which carries a price tag of C\$156,749 (£93,500).

PREVOST has been a highly regarded coach designer and-builder for almost 100 years, and it provides the RV chassis/body, but doesn't convert them. Instead, the first purchaser can choose from its highly skilled subcontractors. Most Prevost RVs are bespoke, although the firm does have a range of models for dealer stock, such as the H3 4VIP pictured below: 13.72m (45ft) long, with rear steering axles.



CONVERSION KITS Removable modular conversions for small vehicles are becoming popular with first-timers seeking an environmentally friendly and low-cost way to tour. Freeway is based in Quebec and this is its Malibu 4 Campervan Kit, which is designed for vehicles similar to the Kia Sedona. Price: C\$4000 (£2400).



TRIPLE E TODAY We've come full circle, returning to Triple E. It has moved with the times, away from boxy gas-guzzling A-class offerings, now concentrating on C-class, design-led coachbuilds since its 2008 takeover of Leisure Travel Vans. This Merc Sprinter-based, champagne-coloured moulded GRP Serenity is just gorgeous. Not a right-angle join or sharp edge in sight. Interior's stunning as well!



pre-owned

The place to come for used-'van news, buying advice and more each issue



NICK HARDING

Are we returning to a point where dealerships can finally say their stocks of pre-owned models are getting back to normal?

A guarded 'nearly', I'd say.

You only have to skim through the main dealer websites to see there's much more pre-owned stock around, which bodes well. Marquis Leisure is the UK's leading specialist motorhome retailer in terms of outlets, with more than 150 pre-owned vehicles on sale across its 13 branches at the time of writing.

The Motorhome Dealer Group can point to over 80 vehicles at its outlets, while Brownhills has more than 50 used models on display.

In addition, we're starting to see 'vans marked 'Special offer', with a corresponding price drop – a sure sign that retailers have stock they are keen to shift after it has been sitting just a little bit too long on their forecourts.

Email Nick via practical.motorhome@futurenet.com

Pre-owned know-how

A monthly round-up of shows, news and advice

Diesel or petrol?

One important aspect to consider when buying preowned is the type of vehicle on which the motorhome is based. Turbodiesel-engined varieties dominate the market. They bring no advantage in terms of fuel economy, but they do offer lots of torque at low revs, and better performance than older non-turbo diesel engines.

Petrol-engined models are less popular, but don't dismiss them out of hand: they are cheaper to buy than diesels, quieter and can perform well. And here's a tip for bargain hunters: some of the best bargains you'll find on the pre-owned market will be those motorhomes built on less commonly used base vehicles, such as the Renault Master.

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Ten great 'vans under £10k

Shopping on a tight budget? Gentleman Jack rounds up a superb selection of pre-owned motorhomes at bargain-basement prices



Images: eBay/AutoTrader

FORECOURT

The latest from dealers around the UK

Auto-Trail's Refresh hits the spot

A new service for owners of its motorhomes has been inundated with enquiries since being introduced by Auto-Trail.

The Grimsby-based manufacturer announced its Refresh project at the start of this year – and immediately started receiving numerous requests from owners looking to have decals replaced, paintwork freshened up and/or professionally polished, joins resealed, extras fitted and more at its specialist Repair Centre.

Auto-Trail says guide prices are hard to offer because so many factors come into play, from the age and condition of the vehicle to the availability of parts and estimated completion time. But all visiting 'vans also get a free valeting.

Repair Centre manager Clare Osborne says: "We are delighted to help our customers with Auto-Trail Refresh and have been overwhelmed with interest in the service. Over time, vehicles lose their shine, get damaged and need a bit of TLC. By investing in the upkeep of your 'van, you can prolong its life and add to its value." Find out more at auto-trail.co.uk/refresh.

Choose Leisure appoints a new MD

Dave Williams is the new managing director of Choose Leisure, in Canterbury, Kent. He counts stints at manufacturers Swift, Bailey, and most recently, Auto-Sleepers – where he was sales and marketing director – as part of a long career



1 Auto-Trail's new Refresh service is proving popular

2 Dave Williams joins Kent-based Choose Leisure as MD

in the motorhome industry. His move comes exactly 10 years after Choose Leisure was given the Auto-Sleepers franchise.

Dave's arrival allows Choose founders, Paul and Jenny Santos, to step back from the day-to-day running of the business. Paul moves to the role of chairman, while Dominic Price, previously general manager, has been made sales director.

Dave says: "When we appointed Choose Leisure (with the Auto-Sleepers franchise) 10 years ago, little did I know that what lay ahead would lead to me joining them as MD after 11 great years with Auto-Sleepers! I'm over the moon to be leading their incredible team." Find out more at chooseleisure.co.uk.



PROFILE Auto-Sleeper Broadway EL

It's had quite a chequered career, but the Auto-Sleeper Broadway EL is alive and very much kicking in 2023, some 17 years after it was launched as a roomy two-berth with a U-shaped rear lounge, based on Peugeot's Boxer chassis-cab.

The body length and layout have changed slightly over time, which includes spells when the EL wasn't even produced at all. However, it does have the distinction of being in continuous production since 2015.

For pre-owned bargains, the Auto-Sleeper Group's own dealer network, Marquis Leisure, is as good a starting point as any. At the time

of writing, though, it had just the one used Broadway EL on its books, albeit with the usual proviso that it can arrange a personal viewing at the nearest branch to you. It's a late 2022-registered model with just 500 miles recorded, at £81,995.

In the Midlands, Broad Lane Leisure also has an excellent 2021 model, priced at £76,995, while the best value example I could find was the £46,995 that Harbour Creek (near Portsmouth) was asking for a two-owner model that's still only done a very modest 19,000 miles since being registered during the first half of 2014.



Plus points Auto-Sleeper parts supply is among the best; comprehensively equipped
Watch for Squeaks and rattles; you should also expect to see

signs of cared-for ownership
Find out more www.practicalmotorhome.com/advice/used-van-buyer-auto-sleepers-broadway-2009-present

used 'van buyer

SPECIAL

10 GREAT 'VANS... ALL UNDER £10K!

In the market for a bargain? Gentleman Jack tracks down some Dagger Sharp Deals – pre-owned motorhomes at unbeatable prices

It might be unfair to criticise some sales folk, but whenever I hear the term 'entry-level' being used to describe a 'van costing £50,000 or more, it really makes me wonder what planet some of them are on.

We know that many people have around £5000 to £10,000 to spend on a motorhome and for a good many of them, this won't be their first vehicle.

Obviously, there are those in jobs that don't pay well at the best of times, and recently, they have been joined by another group, who find themselves with less foldin' than they have been used to. I am still meeting motorcaravanners who have had to sell a high-value 'van and buy a sub-£10,000 model because they have lost their job, or their business, despite

managing to continue through the turbulence of the past few years. For people who are in this situation, these are not just genuinely affordable 'entry-level' 'vans, but affordable 're-entry-level' 'vans as well! Or, as the author prefers to call them, Dagger Sharp Deals.

All of the models featured this month are real examples of motorcaravans up for sale in March 2023, on eBay or AutoTrader. The prices quoted are not guide prices, but actual asking prices. None has been examined 'in the flesh'; the accompanying information was stated in the adverts and hasn't been independently verified.

There was certainly no shortage of contenders, and around 100 were found in just a couple of hours. Good hunting!

Top tips for bargain buys

- First of all, be realistic!
- Always evaluate the seller, as well as what they are selling
- If possible, take along a friend, to prevent you from buying in haste and repenting at leisure
- Don't purchase without evidence of title. Use HPI or similar to check for outstanding finance, serious accidents and so on
- Be prepared to travel to view
- Corrosion is a big enemy. Check carefully the underside, the bulkheads under the bonnet, around the windscreen and in the cab step wells
- Never spend all of your money on the 'van. Keep £1000 in reserve for engine drive belt replacements, habitation check and upgrading/replacement of safety items such as tyres, a fire blanket, carbon monoxide alarm and so on
- A test drive is essential
- We advise a minimum of six months' MOT
- Make sure the canvas is in good condition on pop-tops
- Check body integrity with a damp meter
- And finally, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is!

Inside information

Mechanical spares availability is better for older Ford- and VW-based motorcaravans than the rest. That said, many Citroën C25/Relay/Talbot Express/Peugeot J9/Boxer/Fiat Ducato spares are interchangeable... worth remembering when you're looking for salvage parts

£1500 ono

1984 Renault Trafic Auto-Sleeper elevating-roof.
Not used for a year, no MoT. Solid underneath.
97,000 miles, 1.7-litre petrol

We say...

**Recommission
or clip the
windows, roof,
and furniture
into a newer
base vehicle**



£5500 ono

1990 Citroën C15 Romahome high-top. Two-berth,
78,000 miles, long MoT, new upholstery

We say...

**A wonderful
little
coachbuilt.
GRP shell is
very resistant
to leaks**



£5595 ono

1988 Talbot Express Auto-Sleeper Talisman, 2.0-litre petrol. Another GRP coachbuilt. Well-equipped with solar panel, top-box and awning. Full MoT, 80,412 miles

We say...
Needs buying:
three-month
warranty
included



£6000 ono

1994 Renault Trafic 2.1-litre diesel with EMC high-top. 93,000 miles. Recently resprayed with Raptor paint. Long MoT

We say...
Nicely presented,
worth a look



£6750 ono

1996 LHD Ford Transit Auto Roller 2.5-litre diesel. Ultra-low mileage of just 36,000. Full MoT, four new tyres, 'ready to roll'

We say...
Needs a bit of
TLC, nothing
serious. The
Continent
awaits!



£6950 ono

1998 Ford Transit Herald Squire. 2.5-litre diesel, full MoT, low mileage (69,000). Suffered water ingress in shower room, but now resealed. Interior looks amazing for the money

We say...
PAS, engine
bomb-proof,
very sharply
priced



£7000 no offers

LHD Fiat Ducato ARCA Scout 540 Italian A-class, 2.5-litre diesel. Not many A-classes about for comfortably less than £10k. Six months' MoT, column gearshift, 164,133 miles

We say...
Needs some light
renovation. Perfect
for spending winter
on the Iberian
Peninsula



£8000 ono

1996 VW Transporter with factory-fitted high-top. 2.4-litre turbocharged diesel, 179,000 miles. Nine months' MoT. All underfloor welding completed

We say...
Sought-after
base vehicle
with PAS. Last
owner: six years



£7995

1994 Ford Transit high-top. 2.5-litre diesel engine. Very low mileage (45,000), full MoT. American Cherry interior sympathetically transplanted from an Auto-Trail

We say...
Good-looking,
low-mileage
carriage.
Mechanical
spares will be
easy to source



Bancroft's Belter

£6995 list price

2006 Renault Master window 'van with 2023 interior. 2.5-litre diesel engine, 180,000 miles. Tin-top fits under carports. Highly manoeuvrable campervan with three travel seats. The interior by vendors CJT Campers Ltd (Durham) looks unused – because it is! Complete with brand-new hobs, sink, pumped water, leisure battery, 230V hook-up and fridge

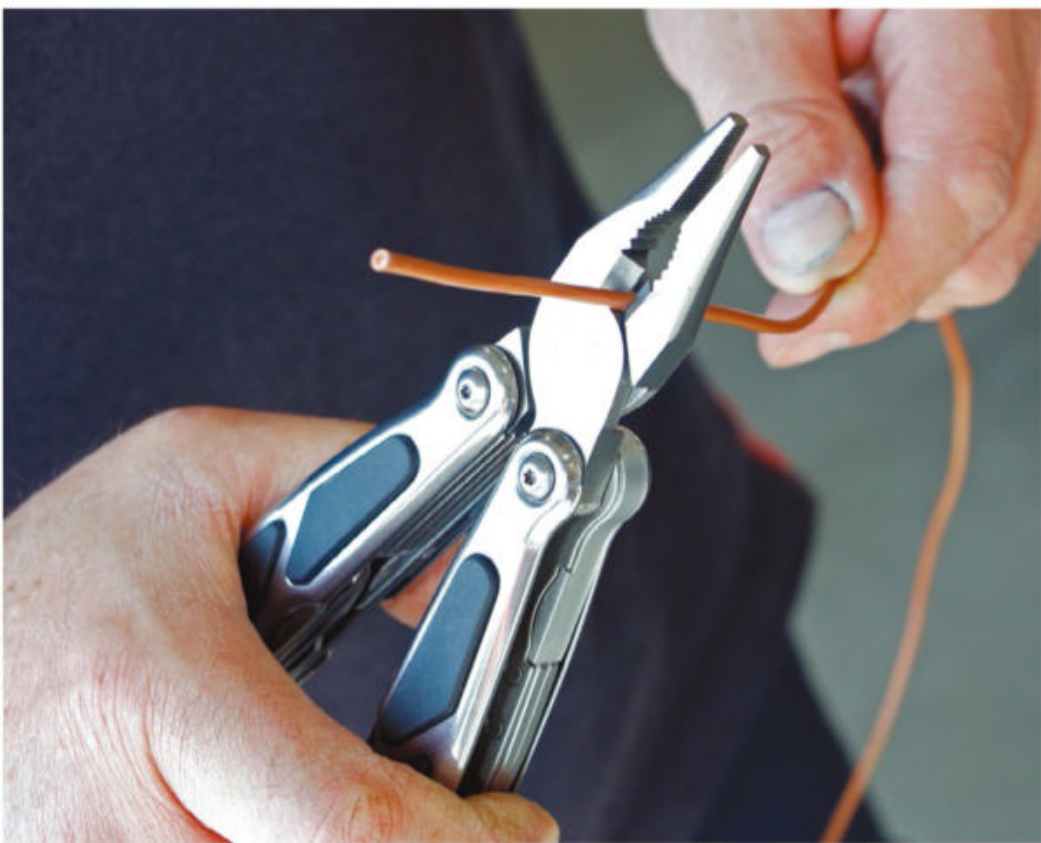


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DIAMOND DAVE

We've seen some interesting problems in the workshop recently. First up was a 30-year-old VW T4 camper in for a routine service. Nothing unusual – the spare tyre (also 30 years old), was cracking, and the brake fluid needed changing.

When I do a brake fluid change, especially on an older vehicle, I use a suction tool to extract the old fluid, then bleed the system, drawing out the old fluid through the nipples at the wheels before refilling and drawing the clean fluid through with the vacuum unit.

This ensures all the old fluid is removed and the pedal doesn't need to be depressed, which is important – on older vehicles, the master cylinder can wear over time, and if you suddenly press the pedal further than it's been moving for years, the seal can be damaged.

A few days later, the customer phoned to say his brakes were spongy and the pedal was going to the floor, so we bled the system again.

About 10 days later, he called to say it had happened again. It had to be the master cylinder, although why was a mystery.

It turns out that brake master cylinders for 30-year-old VWs are a bit rare – none of our regular suppliers could find one. It was time to hit the alternative parts department (aka eBay). I managed to locate the correct part and fitted it a few weeks ago, so fingers crossed, the problem is now fixed.

Email Dave via practical.motorhome@futurenet.com

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WORKSHOP

What's keeping Diamond Dave busy this month?

Handbrake spring has sprung

Another mature 'van that recently came in for a service had a different problem with the brakes. In this case, the handbrake on the nearside rear would suddenly lock on, for no apparent reason.

The motorhome in question was a 2003 Peugeot Boxer-based Auto-Sleeper, with disc brakes all round. The handbrake on these comprises a set of shoes inside the rear disc, which looks rather like a top hat, with the footbrake caliper clamping onto the rim and the handbrake shoes working inside the drum part.

My first thought was that it might be a sticking lever in the shoes assembly, so I had the drums off the rear to check, but all was good.

'The bell crank has a return spring, which should pull the rod to the off position, but the spring was rotten and fell apart as I touched it'

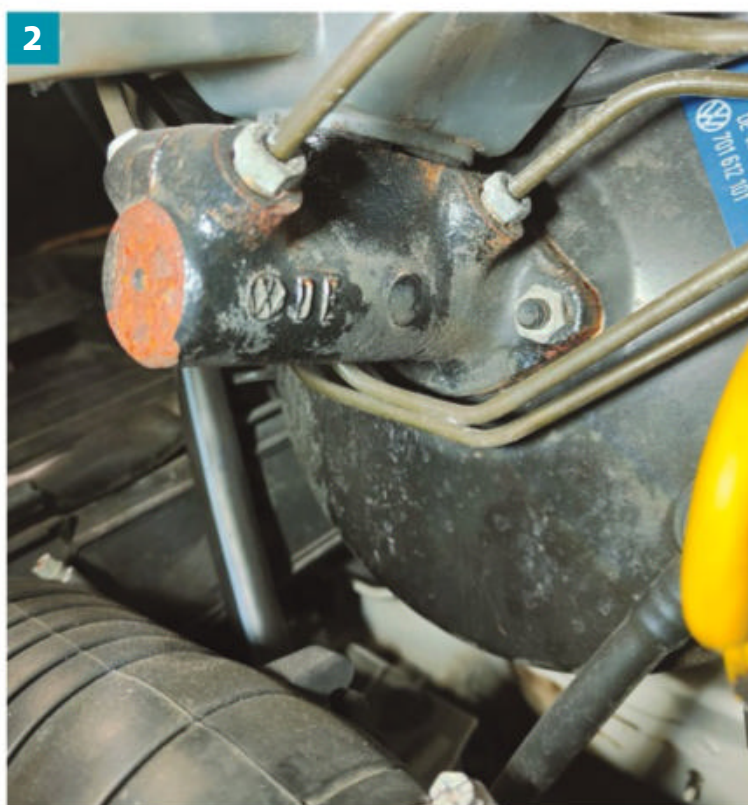
Then I spotted it – the handbrake lever pulls a cable, which runs to a bell crank lever, which in turn pulls a rod. At the other end of the rod is a quadrant with a cable passing through it. This cable runs between the levers that operate the shoes in the brake drums.

The bell crank has a return spring, which should pull the rod to the off position, but the spring was rotten and fell apart as soon as I touched it. Added to that, the bell crank was seized on its shaft, so it was not releasing the shoes fully.

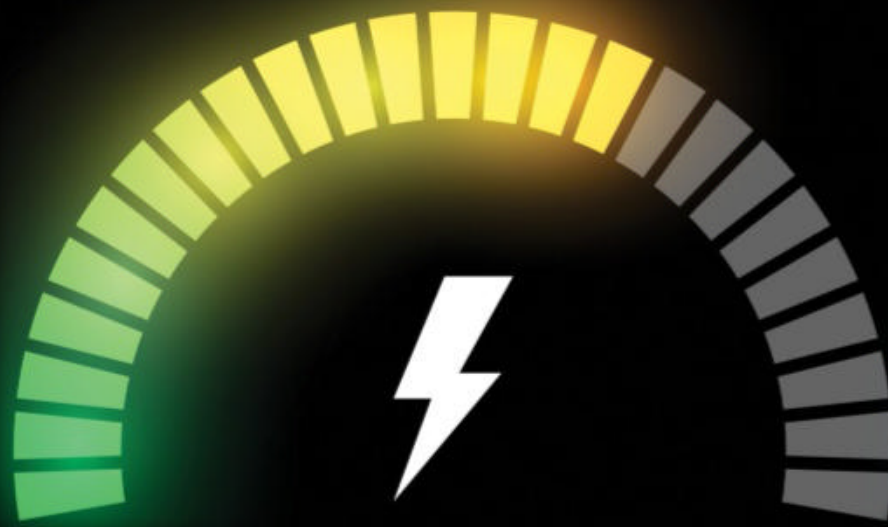
Removing the bell crank and cleaning its shaft, then greasing it all up before reassembly, solved the problem. It just needs a replacement return spring, which has also been sourced from eBay. When that arrives, we'll be able to send another mature motorhome back out into the world.



1 A rotten bell crank return spring caused the handbrake on this 2003 Auto-Sleeper to malfunction



2 The master cylinder on this 30-year-old VW T4 campervan needed replacing



POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

There's a great deal of hype surrounding portable power stations, but what are they, and do you really need one? Peter Rosenthal delves beneath the surface of these fancy – but handy – boxes

Portable power stations have really taken off recently – for many who post online, they're a must-have item that promises to transform your motorcaravanning life. But what exactly are portable power stations – and do you need one?

The first point to bear in mind is that, over the years, motorhome manufacturers have refined their products to the point where the modern vehicle is a pretty powerful bit of kit, which can generally offer you at least a weekend's camping on its built-in battery power.

If you find yourself in need of more off-grid capability, the cheapest way to achieve this is simply to double or triple your battery bank.

However, power banks are still very popular – so what are they all about?

WHAT IS A POWER BANK?

A portable power station doesn't replace the motorhome's electricity source, but is designed to be used as a standalone all-in-one box, which usually features an inverter (so you can have 240V mains power), several 12V and USB sockets, all powered from an internal battery. The amount of power that you can have will depend

very much on the size of your power bank's internal battery.

The internal battery is usually a small lithium iron phosphate unit, which has the benefit of being able to be drained down to a low level without damage, while still maintaining constant voltage. The best motorhomes are



This is the typical power set-up in many motorhomes – a modest solar panel trickle-charging a 100Ah leisure battery (plus a mains charging system)

already fitted with these types of batteries and they are an excellent choice for a leisure battery.

Some power bank models also link to folding solar panel systems, while others are modular, allowing you to easily add more battery power to the power station should you need it.

The key point to be aware of here is that the size of the internal battery determines every aspect of the unit; while your motorhome might have a large battery bank of 100-200Ah, for a battery bank to be portable and compact, they will usually use much smaller battery packs.

Larger power banks do offer much longer running times for electrical equipment, but they're bulky and heavy, making them trickier to handle and taking up storage space and payload.

WHAT CAN THEY POWER?

One of the most common themes relating to power supplies is that many people struggle to envisage the amount of power that certain items need.

For example, a domestic electric kettle is around 3000W. To power it from your leisure battery or power station, you'd need a 3000W continuously rated

inverter, which would consume about 250A in use. That's enough power to drain a 100Ah battery in minutes and is the sort of current that you can weld metal with.

There's no way a portable power station could power that. Nor would you want it to, with that amount of current flowing around.

So realistically, you'll want to only be using power banks with low-powered electrical items that are under 500W in total. Generally speaking, anything that heats, cools or has a motor will be a heavier consumer of power.

Microwaves, air-conditioning units and heaters are the heaviest electrical consumers of all. Here is a rough idea of the power draw of some common motorhome items:

- USB fan 5W
- Fairy lights 10W
- Mobile phone trickle charger 10W
- Mobile phone fast charger 40W
- Laptop 45W
- CPAP machine 60W
- Electric bike charger 80W
- High-power laptop (gaming or video editing) 250W
- Fridge 250W
- Sandwich maker 1000W
- Inverter and air fryer 1500W
- Inverter and coffee machine 1500W
- Inverter and fan heater 1500W
- Inverter and microwave 3000W

WHAT FEATURES DO THEY HAVE?

Almost all power stations feature a built-in inverter linked to at least one 240V socket, and various USB and USB-C sockets, together with 12V sockets. Many now provide a variety of 12V outputs for powering all sorts of electrical equipment remotely.

Some also have a wireless charging panel for mobile devices and built-in lighting, making them ideal for use in awnings or tents.

Some models are modular and you can clip on extra battery units if you need more power. So they're quite flexible for adding electricity to a location remote from mains power.

‘Most power banks feature a built-in inverter along with 240V, USB, USB-C and 12V sockets’



The Totalpower 500 power station costs around £600, weighs in at 6.5kg and features a 40Ah battery



Usefully, the Totalpower 500 also has its own built-in light, and can provide wireless charging on the unit's top

If you want to power delicate electrical items, such as a coffee machine, laptop or medical equipment, it's essential to look for a unit with a pure sine wave inverter. These smooth the electrical current and will work with most 240V electrical equipment.

A modified sine wave inverter is entirely different and far cheaper than a pure sine wave model – and can potentially make delicate equipment malfunction. If in doubt, always go for a pure sine wave inverter, because it is far more compatible with a wide range of electrical equipment.

When shopping around for power stations, you should be wary of very cheap products from unknown brands that are supplied direct from China and claim to feature pure sine wave inverters – this isn't always the case.

If the item that you select is being supplied direct from China, it could also have circumvented important electrical safety testing – we have highlighted the dangers of such untested products before in *Practical Motorhome*. It really is best to bear in mind that if the price seems to be too good to be true...

For this reason, we would always recommend sticking to reputable

UK suppliers for power banks – you'll also have less of an issue with the warranty in the event of any fault developing in the unit.

CONVERTING WH TO AH

Working out the size of the battery often requires a little maths, because power bank makers don't always quote capacity in amp hours (Ah).

Most people are familiar with leisure battery terminology and understand that in theory, a 100Ah battery can deliver 10A for 10 hours, or 1A for 100 hours. In practice, it can't, because there is a maximum depth of discharge before the battery is permanently damaged, so it's only ever safe to use 50% of the available capacity.

In other words, 10A for five hours or 1A for 50 hours. Going for a 200Ah battery doubles the available capacity, 400Ah triples it. And so on.

Power banks tend to be rated in terms of watt hours (Wh), which can be a bit confusing. For example, take a typical 240Wh power bank – to convert Wh to Ah, simply divide the figure by 12V (or the voltage the unit runs at).

So, if that unit runs at 14.4V, it will be 240/14.4 = 16.7Ah. You can buy a 20Ah AGM battery for around £40 and an unbranded lithium iron phosphate one for about £90, so you'll need to decide if the extra outlay (the power bank could cost at least double the latter) is the best option for you.

HOW MUCH DO THEY COST?

The Bluetti AC200MAX currently costs £1899 and offers 142Ah of capacity. It is possible to buy a high-quality 100Ah lithium iron phosphate battery for £650, so £1000 easily gets you 150Ah of lithium power.

The equivalent in lead acid batteries would cost around £200.

The Bluetti also has a 2200W pure sine wave inverter (which can be bought for around £300 on their own) and about £50-worth of switches and 12/240V sockets. So you are essentially paying extra for the neat packaging and the display screen.

Some customers might not consider this worthwhile, while others are likely to appreciate the tidy appearance and the additional features, as well as the fact that they have everything in one handy unit.

THE WEIGHT OF THE UNIT

As with anything that passes through the door of your motorhome, you have to allow for the weight of the power ➡

station that you will be using, and subtract it from your payload.

While some smaller power stations are not that heavy (for example, the Jackery Explorer 240 is a very portable 3kg), some larger-capacity units are pretty bulky. The Bluetti AC200MAX weighs 28.1kg, so isn't something you're going to want to lug for any great distance.

Ideally, you want to pick the lightest model of power station that you can get away with for your energy needs. And the lighter the unit, the more you are going to use it.

PORTABILITY

This is the number one reason to buy a power station – you can take power outside with you. If you work remotely on a laptop, being able to do so outside your motorhome in the sunshine, with a great view, is an appealing thought. This works best if the unit isn't too heavy and you can carry it in addition to all of your other work paraphernalia.

If you simply want to be able to work outside the motorhome, using a mains or 12V extension lead might work just as well, and costs less.

So, when considering a power bank, it's all about trying to source one that offers you just enough battery power for your needs, and perhaps mating it up to a compact solar panel. While solar panels are trickle-chargers that only work really well in summer, that might be a good solution for you. After all, who wants to work outside in winter?

Being portable also means that when you sell on your motorhome, you can transfer the power bank to your next leisure vehicle without the hassle and cost of wiring.

In addition, you will be able to have a portable power supply in a gazebo, or another vehicle, so it can be a handy



The Ecoflow Delta Max 1600 has a 134Ah battery, and can power up to a 2000W hairdryer. But – at 22kg – it'll eat up a chunk of your payload, and it costs around £1650

item to have for other applications, too. Many people use them for Bluetooth speakers and fairy lights, for example.

Plus, a portable and charged power bank is a handy thing to keep at home, in case of power cuts.

NOT KEEN ON DIY?

The other reason to buy a power station is if you're not competent at DIY and don't trust yourself to safely wire in an inverter. Inverters often carry massive currents – hundreds of amps when used with high-power items such as microwaves – and you really need to know exactly what you're doing when wiring them in place.

If you would struggle to wire up a three-pin plug, inverter wiring isn't for you, and if you don't want to pay a professional to install one, adding a power station is another option.

CHARGING POWER BANKS

All portable power stations are battery powered, so you will need to charge them up after they've been drained down. The charging time required will depend on the unit's battery capacity.

To give you a rough idea of the times involved, the Totalcool Totalpower 500 (which has a 40Ah battery) takes about seven hours to charge on a 90W mains charger and around 11 hours to do so on a vehicle charge.

Solar takes around eight hours when using the optional £300 100W solar

panel, but this assumes eight hours of full sun, which in the UK – classed as a cold climate – isn't always assured.

On cloudy summer days, this might double – so two days to charge up via solar is possible. However, the unit can be used while it's charging, so this could still extend your usable power.

During the winter months, all power stations will take considerably longer to recharge in the UK, so you will definitely be better off charging them from the mains supply.

Some of the larger units – those with 60Ah batteries and above – would need several hundred watts of solar power to recharge them, even in the peak of the summer. These would take days to



The Ecoflow River 2 Max costs £550 and has a 42Ah battery, which offers 500W of continuous power. It weighs in at 6kg



The Energie Zen Alternative Comb-E600 power station may be a bit of a mouthful, but it comes with a 40Ah battery and a 600W pure sine wave inverter

charge up with just a 100W solar panel, so it's really most practical to charge them back up via the mains.

DO I NEED A POWER BANK?

Basically, there are two advantages to running a separate power supply: first, it's portable, and second, if you are not good at DIY wiring, it avoids the risk of damaging your motorhome with bodged wiring.

The downside is that you're paying a premium to have a battery, inverter and sockets in an attractive box with a handle. But they are a convenient way of adding power to a day 'van or part-time camper, and using solar power raises their green credentials.

It really all depends on your needs. If you just want to extend your wild camping capability, then a more cost-effective solution is to double up your battery bank. Going from 100Ah to 200Ah instantly doubles your battery reserves and will cost quite a bit less than the price of an equivalent capacity power bank. It works 24/7 and doesn't need the sun to be out to work (unlike just adding a solar panel).

A 100Ah battery will typically cost you around £150 for a quality brand, or around £650 for a lithium iron phosphate one. The latter is the best long-term bet, and some of the newer models come with 10-year warranties



The Bluetti AC300 unit can be linked to its B300 modular battery to give a whopping 256Ah of power. It weighs in at 57kg and will cost in the region of £3400

and all sorts of useful features (such as Bluetooth apps that provide you with remote voltage and charging/discharging information).

If your interest in a portable power station is to gain an inverter or some extra 12V or USB sockets, then one option is to have these items added to your motorhome directly.

As little as £10 easily buys you a 12V or USB socket online and these can be dotted around your vehicle where you need them (remembering, of course,



A small solar panel can extend the run time of your power station's battery, but only in direct sunlight. In winter, it's better to recharge the unit via the mains supply

to fuse each one – and always employing a professional to fit them if you're in any way unsure in your abilities).

A UK-sourced inverter can cost from £40 for a 300W model, which can be wired up in less than an hour. So even if you are paying for a professional to do the job, it shouldn't cost too much.

However, if you're looking for a neat, portable, all-in-one pack that can recharge a variety of items no matter where you are – including at home – you could consider a power bank.

VERDICT

Power banks definitely have their place in the world of leisure vehicle electricals, so long as you bear in mind that they are still quite a specialist application.

Of course, their portability is their real advantage, so it's best to pick one you can lift outside with ease, which won't take up a lot of room.

If you don't need a portable unit and you simply want to have more battery capacity, then adding a second leisure battery, or swapping to lithium iron phosphate cells, would be an easier upgrade, and one which will benefit all aspects of your motorhome.

The good thing is, there is so much choice in the market – no matter what your power requirements, there will be a power bank to suit your needs. ■



Jackery's Explorer 240 offers 16.9Ah of battery for £260

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WHY YOU NEED A MOTORHOME COVER

New or pre-owned, your motorhome is a major investment, so it makes sense to protect it from the elements, says John Sootheran



Fitting a good cover, such as this one from Protec, will protect your 'van when not in use

Motorhome covers are available in a wide variety of shapes and styles, but all have one thing in common: when fitted and used properly, they should help protect your 'van for years to come.

Choosing your cover wisely is very important – the best can add years of life (and looks) to your vehicle, while others have the potential to damage it.

Selecting a suitable material is vital, as any cover that traps moisture on the surfaces of your motorhome for long periods may do more harm than good.

Why buy a motorhome cover?

Most motorhomes spend at least half of the year standing dormant – on your drive, in a farmyard or at a specialist storage facility.

Wherever you keep it, your 'van will deteriorate most rapidly when it is not in use. Moving parts can seize up, seals and sealant perish, finishes discolour and metal components corrode.

This degeneration is partly down to the weather, but it's also a result of the effects of the UV radiation in sunlight. UV light can be highly damaging to

motorhomes, causing cracking, flaking and chalking in plastic, rubber, glass fibre and paint finishes.

UV affects paintwork in two ways. UV-A dries out resins in the paint, causing it to shrink and crack, while UV-B attacks the pigments, resulting in fading and discoloration.

As well as protecting your vehicle from these adverse effects, a cover will safeguard your cherished 'van from the negative consequences of airborne contaminants, tree sap and bird droppings (which are damaging and can be tough to remove).

Regarding the vehicle interior, a cover shields furnishings and finishes from the fading effects of sunlight.

Motorhome covers can also provide a welcome additional layer of protection against physical attack by thieves.

With a cover, opportunists can't see inside, and if they do break in, they can't see out either, which must be unnerving, even to the most brazen crook. This might just encourage them to move on and try elsewhere.

So not only will a cover save you days of elbow-grease and cleaning time over

the lifetime of the 'van, it should also result in a higher residual value when you come to sell it on.

This is because by buying and using a good-quality cover, you are clearly demonstrating to any potential buyers that you're the sort of person who really looks after their possessions.

The cover should have maintained your motorhome in the best possible condition – and you should always make sure to point this out to your prospective customers.

Together, these two factors could easily increase the sale price of your vehicle, to more than offset the original price of the cover. In this way, buying a good motorhome cover can be seen as an investment, rather than a cost.

What makes a good cover?

As with any other kind of product, you really do get what you pay for when you choose a motorhome cover.

Yes, very cheap options are available from the likes of eBay, and they might suffice, but if you have laid out large amounts of your hard-earned on the 'van, wouldn't it be sensible to make



This full Protec cover provides complete protection against the weather for your 'van



Industrial sewing machines are used to stitch those all-important cover seams



Specialised Covers has a huge database of measurements for bespoke protection

a relatively small extra investment, by purchasing a top-quality, long-lasting cover to protect it?

Waterproofing

Hydrostatic head is the scientific gauge measuring material 'waterproofing'. Just imagine a column of water sitting on a piece of material – its height in millimetres, before any water seeps through the fabric, is the measure of how waterproof that material is.

Opinions vary somewhat as to what actually constitutes 'waterproof'. The Ministry of Defence says that it's under 1000mm, while some of the outdoor clothing manufacturers stipulate 4000mm (that's 4m of water!).

Specialised Covers, for example, uses a material that provides a hydrostatic head of 2500mm, while Protec says 1000mm is more than enough for the worst the UK weather might do.

Of course, a large area of fabric may well be waterproof, but the minute you stitch a couple of panels together, you introduce potential weak spots along all the seams. The best covers feature minimal seaming, both to maximise

the waterproofing and minimise the chance of any weak seam ripping.

In the case of Protec, its stitching is described as "twin-needle, lap seamed with bonded-nylon thread" for added strength and durability.

Breathability

The best covers also have a breathable membrane layer, which allows vapours to escape through the fabric.

This eliminates 'sweating' under the cover, preventing damp, mildew and mould. Of course, some heat is needed to make moisture vaporise. That's not

a problem in spring and summer, but even in winter, a dark cover might absorb enough heat on a sunny day to cause evaporation.

As with most things motorhome related, there is a compromise. In this case, it's between waterproofing and breathability – as one increases, the other declines.

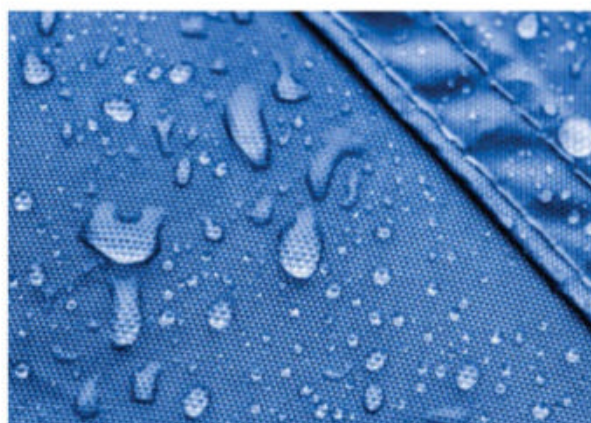
Soft liner

Plastic and painted motorhome finishes can easily lose their shiny appearance to the constant abrasion of a loose-fitting cover flapping in the wind. It therefore makes sense for the inner surface of the cover to be soft, to minimise this effect.

The best manufacturers have factored this in, with Specialised Covers saying its soft inner lining features the same technology as a baby's nappy!

Strength and durability

The material in any motorhome cover needs tensile strength, plus elongation and tear resistance. This imbues it with the properties that are needed for it to carry out its job effectively for years. ➔



Protec uses Protex003 fabric for covers that balance waterproofing and breathability

How to fit a full-size cover

Ideally, you'll need a dry day and two people to fit a full cover, because they are large, awkward and heavy. Try to avoid fitting the cover with any moisture or dirt on the 'van, or the inner surface of the 'jacket'.

First, remove the main cover from its bag and lay it out, exterior down, in front of the vehicle. Position it with the front end of the cover next to the 'van's front bumper.

You'll need a couple of extendable poles to make fitting easier. Costing around £12

each, they are available from online retailers, DIY stores, or cover manufacturers.

Extend the pole so that when you reach up, it's long enough to lift the cover over the highest point on the motorhome roof.

Now slot the ends of the two poles into the small corner pockets on each side, at the end of the cover furthest from the 'van. In unison, raise the cover up above head height, and then walk to the back of the motorhome, ensuring that you lift it high

enough to clear any roof furniture. Once you reach the back, carefully pull the cover down and adjust the fabric.

Next, make sure the hook-and-loop door panel is fully sealed.

Finally, fit any adjustable straps around the corners and feed the side straps under the motorhome to the clips on the opposite flank. All of the straps should be tightened, but care must be taken not to stretch or stress the cover fabric.



Fitting is easy if you follow a few simple steps and make use of extendable poles...



... which slot into the corner pockets on your cover to facilitate handling

Investing in a better (more expensive) motorhome cover really will pay dividends in the longer term.

Fit

Custom-made covers are much better than universal ones, and almost always easier to use on your motorhome.

In one Trustpilot review, a purchaser complains that they don't know what to do with the "spare foot of fabric, flapping around" on their universal-fit cover! If your budget dictates a cheaper option, take time to find the best fit.

Bespoke equipment

If you have a solar panel, air-con or satellite dish fitted to your 'van, you'll need a custom cover to accommodate them – speak to suppliers to find out if this is offered.

Airflow

You don't want your cover flapping around, but some airflow under and around the vehicle could help to facilitate the evaporation process.

Access

Another important factor to consider is that, if you will need to gain access to your motorhome's interior while it's in storage – perhaps for cleaning or maintenance purposes – you are going to require a cover that is fitted with a quick-release door flap, which allows for easy entrance and exit.

The better manufacturers build these into their covers as a matter of course, and they are simply secured with zips or hook-and-loop tape.



When you need to access the interior, a zipped or taped door panel will help

Budget

For a decent full cover, you'll be looking at a cost of up to £500 – cheaper options are available.

Delivery time

Currently, it looks as though you'll be waiting anything from two to 12 weeks if you decide to go for a custom-made motorhome cover. You should be able to get a universal cover from an online store in a week or less.

Warranty

Almost all of these products will have a one-year warranty, but do take care if your cover is being imported from abroad. Covers made by the main British firms typically have a one-year warranty for manufacturing, and a three-year warranty on the fabric.

Contacts

Protec Covers 📞 pro-teccoversonline.co.uk
Specialised Covers 📞 specialisedcovers.com
Maypole Covers 📞 maypoleltd.com
Royal Leisure 📞 royal-leisure.co.uk



TELL US ABOUT YOUR TOP SITE!

Our annual Top 100 Sites Guide, produced in association with *Practical Caravan* magazine, recognises the very best sites in the UK. Large or small, adults only or family friendly, there are some truly fantastic parks out there.

We've launched our next online survey, which allows you to vote for your favourite park – or parks! To have your say, simply visit

www.practicalmotorhome.com/vote

and enter the details of the site that you think deserves recognition in our guide.

This year's survey closes on 10 November 2023.

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Practical
Motorhome

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WHO BUILDS BRITAIN'S BEST 'VANS?

Tell us about your buying and owning experiences, and you could be in with a chance of winning a great prize!

The Owner Satisfaction Awards 2024 will be organised by *Practical Motorhome* with The Camping and Caravanning Club for the seventh year in a row – but we can't do it without you. If you've bought a new or pre-owned motorhome since 1 January 2020, and have owned it for at least three months, then we'd love to hear from you. Tell us how you were treated when you bought the motorhome, how it's behaved, and whether or not you would buy again from the same dealer!

Launched in 2004, our Owner Satisfaction Awards is the only industry scheme that's completely based on owner feedback, including both the practicality and reliability of the motorhome itself. What's more, everyone who completes our survey stands a chance of winning a top prize of a seven-night stay at a C&CC site of their choice; there are two additional prizes of a three-night stay at a C&CC site of their choosing. The survey closes on 22 October 2023.

For competition T&Cs, see www.campingandcaravanningclub.co.uk/tc.

Have your say by 22 October 2023, at
www.practicalmotorhome.com/oss

TALKING TOILETS

Confused about which chemicals you should (or shouldn't) be using in your motorhome toilet? Here we explain the various types and how to use them

One of the many great benefits of owning a motorhome is having your own facilities on board, which makes keeping your toilet fresh and clean really important.

There's a wealth of toilet chemicals out there, however, so what's the difference between them, and which should you choose?

Here's our guide to the different types available, and what they do.

Waste-tank chemicals

The typical motorhome toilet includes a holding tank below the bowl – once this is full, you remove the cassette, before emptying it into a dedicated disposal point (never anywhere else).

It's crucial to use some form of toilet chemical or additive in the tank to help break down waste and paper, and keep things smelling fresh.

When purchasing, look for bottles that have the words 'toilet fluid' on them, and double check that they are suitable for use in motorhome waste tanks (the liquid is usually blue or green). Most 'van owners use bottled chemicals, but it's also possible to buy tablets that will do the same thing.

Always check the bottle for the correct dosage, and add the chemical via the cassette outlet spout, rather than via the toilet bowl, to prevent damage to the latter.

The most environmentally friendly chemicals are formaldehyde free, so keep an eye out for this on packaging. Bear in mind, too, that some campsites – both in the UK and



Using appropriate chemicals in suitable dosages helps to maintain your facilities



There are plenty of products to choose from, and it makes sense to shop around

across Continental Europe – will only allow you to dispose of waste where formaldehyde is not used.

Toilet flush chemicals

Similar to domestic toilets, motorhome units have a flush facility – press the button on the toilet and clean water rinses through to help shift any waste into the holding tank. Some motorhome flush water comes via the onboard tank, but in other models, it comes from a dedicated flush tank. If yours has the latter, you can add flush chemicals.

These are usually pink and perfumed – you simply add the correct dose to your water flush tank. Note that you don't need to add flush chemical if you would prefer not to: many motorhome owners simply use fresh water.

Combined products

Some manufacturers, such as OLPRO (olproshop.com), with its Bottom & Top, and Fenwick (fenwickscaravan.com), with Top & Tail, produce

chemicals that can be used in both the cassette waste tank and the flush water tank. The benefit is that you only have to carry one bottle on tour.

Looking to the future

One of the new names on the market is Solbio. They claim this is the “only 100% natural toilet fluid for motorhomes, caravans and boats”.

The all-natural ingredients include soaps, citric acid and essential oils, and the product is both child- and pet-friendly. A 40-dose bag costs £24.99 from Solbio's website (solbio.co.uk), with free UK mainland delivery.



Solbio makes a natural toilet fluid offering an eco-friendly solution



Read the labels before you buy to find out about the ingredients and correct usage

Find out more

To browse the products in our online guide to some of the best toilet chemicals out there, use your phone or tablet camera to visit our website via the QR code above



TAKING CHARGE OF ELECTRICS

Nigel Hutson goes behind the scenes at the leisure vehicle specialists BCA



1

1 BCA Group Sales and Marketing Director Wayne Boyd

2 BCA Group's HQ, home to BCA Leisure and BCA Motion

3 Inside BCA Leisure's busy production facility

It's quite amazing, what motorcaravanners take for granted. For example, who's ever given a thought to how all of those electrical items operate just when we want them to?

I recently visited BCA Group in West Yorkshire, where I was given an informative tour of its three constituent companies by Sales and Marketing Director, Wayne Boyd.

BCA Group essentially comprises three firms – BCA Leisure makes wiring harnesses, control panels and power distribution units (PDUs) for leisure vehicles, while BCA Motion deals with battery boxes and smaller-scale wiring harnesses for panel van conversion manufacturers.

The third company, Pennine Leisure Supplies (PLS), supplies dealerships and other outlets with accessories such as lamps, kettles, cable reels, water pumps, electrical sockets and switches, as well as mains electric kits for van conversions.

BCA Leisure was founded in 1981 by Wim Batist. Before buying its first premises (a former mill in Mytholmroyd, a few miles from BCA's current location), Wim would travel to the UK with his van and trailer loaded with touring accessories on a Monday morning, drive the length and breadth of the country throughout the week, selling his wares, then return home on Saturday to reload, ready for the following Monday.

Branching out

At the time, the best-seller was Smat caravan towing mirrors, which he imported from Italy.

Wim's father and brother ran a very successful dealership in the Netherlands, so you'd definitely say that touring was in the family's blood.

On acquiring the old mill, as well as continuing to supply the accessories, Wim contacted some caravan brands, to see if he could supply them

with 25m mains hook-up cables (leisure vehicle electrics were so much simpler back then!).

Once the business was established in the UK, Wim was approached by a manufacturer enquiring about producing 230V wiring harnesses for dealer retrofit into caravans.

About 20 years ago, it was clear new premises were needed – BCA had outgrown the old mill, and the industrial estate where they are now was in the process of development, so the mill was sold to help fund their new building.

Initially, PLS was also based at the industrial estate, but four years ago, owing to the need for larger premises, a new building was acquired, three miles away. The former PLS building is now rented by panel van converter WildAx.

BCA Group is still very much a family business. Wim Batist is the Chairman, his eldest son Harrison is in Business Development, and his youngest son William currently works in the Technical Department.

Both Harrison and William are seen as the core of BCA's succession plan, as the group, which employs 160 people, moves into the future.

BCA's first wiring harnesses were made for Bailey, but now alongside them, control systems and harnesses are made for Hymer UK and Coachman, with Swift also buying BCA components.

Cable and connectors

After outlining the history of the group, Wayne took me on a rather mind-boggling tour of BCA Leisure and BCA Motion.

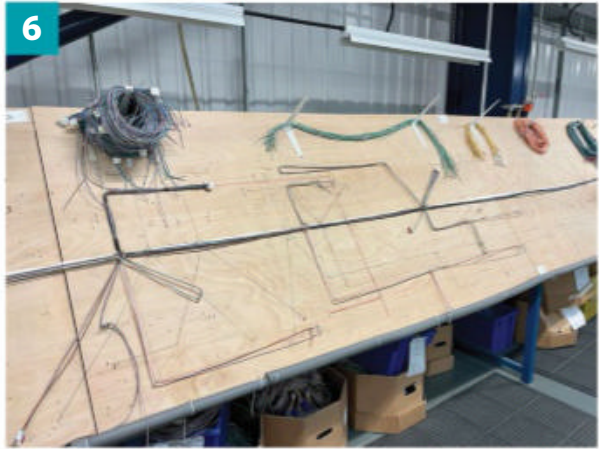
I say mind-boggling because I don't think I've ever seen quite so much cabling, so many different types of connector, or such huge boards where the harnesses are made. Much of this intricate work is done by hand, although there are some



2



3



automated processes. Along the way, many tests and checks are carried out, and no completed harness or control unit will leave the facility until it has been thoroughly tested.

Weighty matters

Now that leisure vehicle wiring has become so complicated, there's a weight implication. BCA works closely with manufacturers to ensure that weight (which could easily exceed 25kg for a harness) is kept to a minimum, all the while maintaining exacting quality standards.

In most cases, there's a main floor harness with numerous 'plug and play' smaller harnesses being connected to that. BCA makes things as simple as possible for the manufacturers, for example by using a variety of plugs and sockets to ensure that the small harnesses only fit in the one required location, eliminating any potential errors.

As an example of just how complicated things have now become, consider this – one popular floor harness has another 25 smaller harnesses that are attached to it. A 7.5m motorhome will quite easily house 600-700m of cabling!

Such is the relationship that BCA has with leisure vehicle manufacturers, if a brand plans to fit a new appliance, BCA is relied on to work out which thickness of cabling is required to cope with (and exceed) the potential load, and also to avoid any possible voltage drop.

Wayne also told me that in recent times, fridge harnesses for caravans have been more challenging, because of the stop/start technology in tow cars. The problem is, if the power cuts so many times, the fridge registers a fault and stops operating on 12V. Thankfully, BCA has overcome the problem.

When making a harness, the furthest point from the power supply is the starting point, likely to be a high-level brake light, and then it will be worked back through the vehicle.

BCA Motion is where the harnesses and control systems for panel van conversions are assembled. Wayne's knowledge of all the firm's products was amazing. For example, he could look at a battery box and immediately say which brand of vehicle it was destined for!

Our final destination was to see PLS, a huge warehouse and distribution centre, and a very impressive operation it is, too. Items are selected from shelves by a fork-lift truck, but much of the work is now semi-automated.

The fork-lift is programmed, so although there is a driver, the vehicle knows where it needs to go and where to select the item. An impressively efficient operation. All I will add here is that it was a very long way up to the roof level!

With thanks to Wayne Boyd and Lewis Gresty (PLS) for showing me around. You can find out more by visiting bcagroup.co.uk or plsgroup.co.uk

4 Assembling a 230V PDU

5 Testing a 230V PDU

6 Assembling floor and sub-harnesses

7 A complicated network of cabling

8 Floor harness all ready for dispatch

9 Assembling battery boxes

10 Just a few of the PLS accessories range

11 A 230V mains kit

12 PLS has a huge warehouse capacity

buyer's guide

VAN CONVERSIONS

These models do exactly what it says on the tin – a manufacturer takes a commercial vehicle (van), then converts the inside to living accommodation. Such vehicles tend to be cheaper than coachbuilt motorhomes, and they are usually shorter too, so they're easier to park and manoeuvre on the road

How to use the guide
We've organised our listings by layout, which is generally the most crucial aspect for buyers. Simply locate the floorplan you like in the guide; then, on the left of it, you'll find details of every UK model with that layout. Simple! This month, we're looking at van conversions (aka campervans).

HIGH TOP, FIXED ROOF

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (£)
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REAR BENCH SEAT, NO WASHROOM

Hillside Birchover All-Motion	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	2	4	71,695
Hillside Birchover Executive	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	2	4	66,295
Hillside Birchover Classic LWB	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	2	4	65,240
Hillside Birchover Classic	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	2	4	62,945
Wellhouse Leisure LUX-XL 2	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	4	57,750
Hillside Birchover S	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	2	4	54,995
Auto Campers Leisure Van Hi Line	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	53,900
Auto Campers mRv Hi Line	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	53,900
Auto Campers Leisure Van Lo Line	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	51,700
Auto Campers mRv Lo Line	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	51,700
Auto Campers Day Van Lo Line	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	2-7	46,750
Auto Campers Day Van Lo Line	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	2-7	44,550

SIDE SOFA, REAR WASHROOM

Murvi Morello XL	Ford Transit	4000	6.7	2	2	76,238
Vantage Vue	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	75,950
Auto-Sleeper Kemerton XL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	3	75,700
WildAx Constellation XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	3	74,995
Murvi Morello XL	Fiat Ducato	4000	6.36	2	2	74,676
Murvi Morocco XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	74,676
WildAx Constellation	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	3	73,995
S&L Atlanta	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	73,950
Auto-Sleeper Symbol Plus	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	3	72,950
Vantage Ora	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	72,950
Murvi Morello	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	72,481
Murvi Pimento XL	Ford Transit	3500	5.98	2	2	72,481
Murvi Morello	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	72,104
Murvi Morocco	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	72,104
Murvi Pimento XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	72,104
Auto-Sleeper Symbol	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.41	2	3	71,950
Murvi Pimento	Ford Transit	3500	5.54	2	2	70,706
Moto-Trek Leisure-Treka EB	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	69,995
Vantage Gem	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	69,950
S&L Iris	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	69,850
Murvi Pimento	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	69,677

TWIN SEATS, REAR WASHROOM/KITCHEN

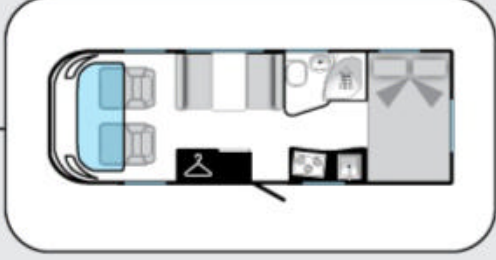
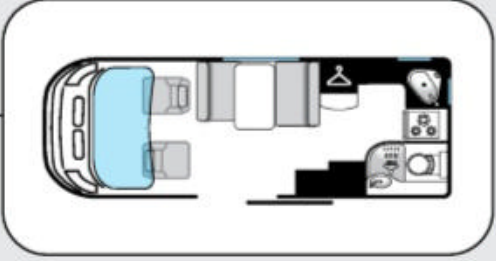
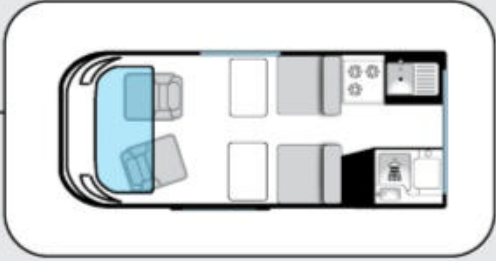
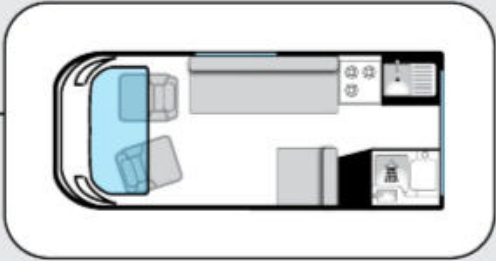
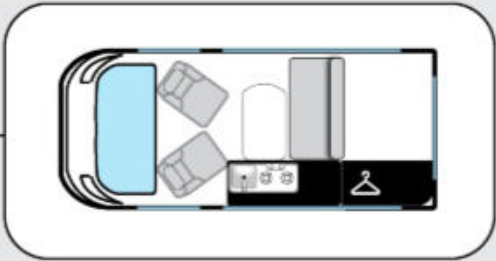
Hillside Cromford	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	2	4	67,095
Jerba Jura	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	2	4	59,495
Devon Firefly LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	2	4	54,720
Greenline RG500	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	53,950
Devon Firefly SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	4	52,748
Greenline RG500	Renault Trafic	3500	5.08	2	4	51,950

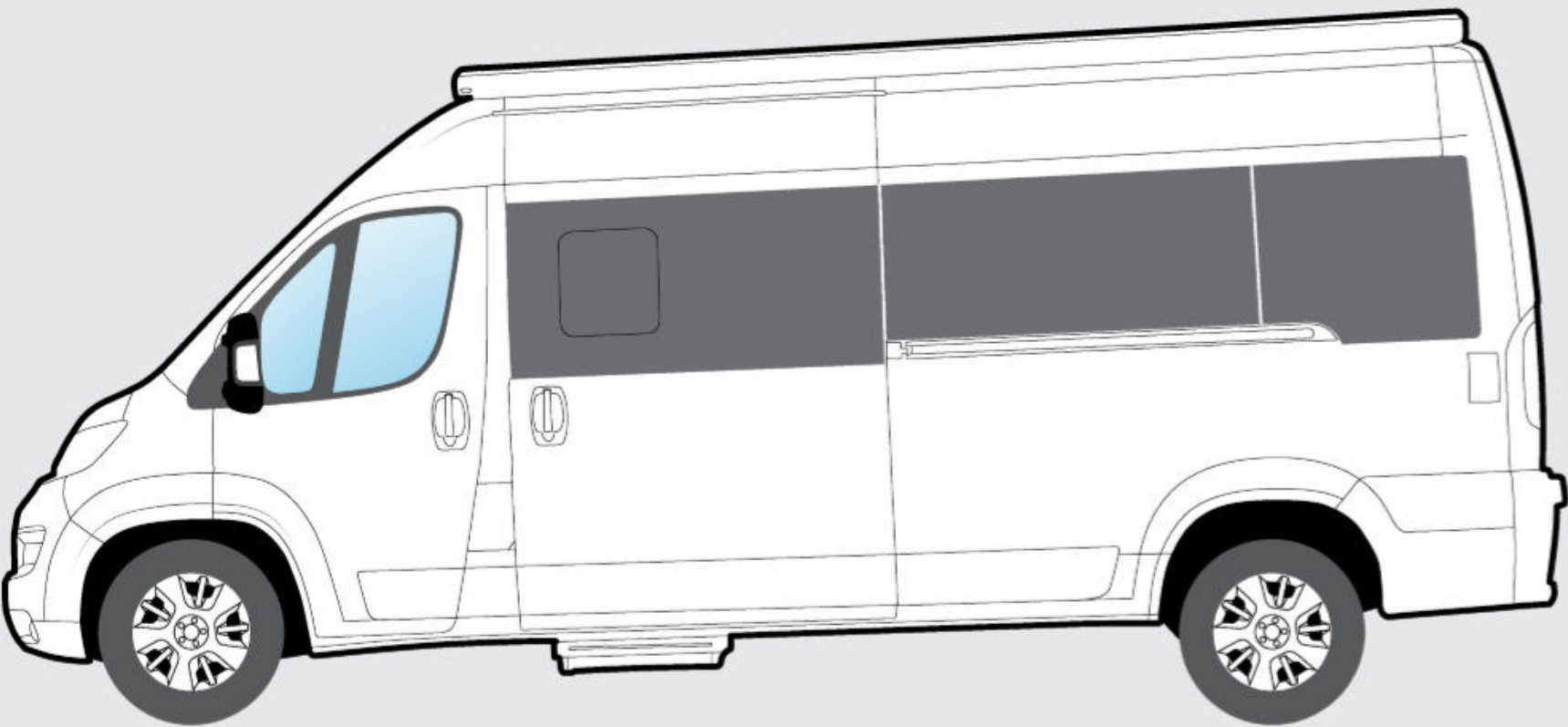
FRONT DINETTE, CORNER KITCHEN

Murvi Piccolo	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	4	4	70,277
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FRONT DINETTE, TRANSVERSE BED

Hymer Grand Canyon S CrossOver	Mercedes Sprinter	5880	5.93	4	4	110,650
Knaus BoxDrive 600 XL 4x4	MAN	3850	5.98	4	4	81,260
Adria Twin Supreme 640 SGX	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	75,525
WildAx Aurora XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	3	74,995
Adria Twin Supreme 640 SPB FAMILY	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	74,920
WildAx Aurora	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	3	73,995
Adria Twin Supreme 600 SX	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	73,780
Pilote Van 633M Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	73,600
Knaus BoxDrive 600 XL	MAN TGE	3500	5.98	4	4	73,480
Adria Twin Supreme 600 SBX	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	73,310
Adria Twin Supreme 600 SPB GB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	73,030
Knaus BoxLife 600 DQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	72,750
Pilote Van 600G Vega XEdition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	72,500
Pilote Van 633M Vega Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	71,600





Hobby Vantana K60FT De Luxe Black	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	71,595
Pilote Van 540G Vega XEdition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	71,500
Pilote Van 630G Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	71,000
Hobby Vantana K60FT De Luxe Expedition/	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	70,995
Hobby Vantana K60FT De Luxe White	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	70,595
Dreamer Select Campervan XL Limited	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	69,000
Pilote Van 630G Vega Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	69,000
Pilote Van 600G Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	69,000
Knaus BoxLife 600 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	68,980
Pilote Van 540G Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	68,000
Globecar Globescout Elegance	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	2	4	67,995
Pilote Van 600G Vega Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	67,000
S&L Echo	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	3	66,950
S&L Clio	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	3	66,850
Globecar Roadscout R Elegance	Citroën Relay	3500	5.41	2	4	66,495
Knaus BoxStar 600 Street	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	66,030
Pilote Van 540G Vega Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	66,000
Knaus BoxStar 60 600 Street	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	65,740
Knaus BoxStar 60 540 Road	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	5	4	64,910
Knaus BoxStar 540 Road	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	5	4	64,600
Hobby Vantana K60FT On Tour Edition Black	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	2	4	64,595
Globecar Summit Shine 600	Citroën Relay	3300	5.99	2	3	63,995
Hobby Vantana K60FT On Tour Edition White	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	2	4	63,995
Hymer Free S	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	2	4	63,860
Globecar Summit Shine 540	Citroën Relay	3300	5.41	2	3	62,995
Dreamer D55 Select Limited	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	3	4	62,300
Malibu Van compact 540 DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	61,910
Bürostner Eliseo C602	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	61,395
Hymer Free 600	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	60,190
Laika Ecovip Camper Van 600	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,126
Hymer Free 540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	58,910
Bürostner Eliseo C540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	58,895
Bürostner Eliseo C543	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	58,895
Malibu Van diversity 600 DB K	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	58,870
Sun Living V60SP	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	58,730
Joa Camp Van 60G	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	2	4	58,600
Rimor Horus 38	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	58,495
Sun Living V55SP	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	58,220
Laika Ecovip Camper Van 540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	58,084
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 DQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	57,950
Malibu Van comfort 600 DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	57,890
Joa Camp Van 54G	Citroën Relay	3500	5.41	2	4	57,600
Dreamer D55 Fun Exclusive	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	3	4	57,500
Sunlight Cliff 540 Adventure Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	57,400
Weinsberg CaraBus 600 K	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	7	4	54,800
Sunlight Cliff 600 Adventure Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	54,600
Globecar Summit Prime 600	Citroën Relay	3300	5.99	2	4	53,995
Sunlight 540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	53,600
Carado CV600	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	53,490
Weinsberg CaraBus 540 MQ	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	5	4	53,330
Laika Kosmo Camper Van 6.0	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	52,540
Carado CV540	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	52,490
Auto-Trail Expedition 68	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	52,460
Globecar Summit Prime 540	Citroën Relay	3300	5.41	2	4	51,995
Laika Kosmo Camper Van 5.4	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	3	4	51,540
Sunlight 600	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	50,800
Etrusco CV600 DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	50,100
Etrusco CV540 DB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	4	49,200

FRONT DINETTE, TRANSVERSE BUNKS						
Pilote Van 600S Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	69,000
Pilote Van 600S Vega Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	67,000
Roller Team Toleno R	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	59,274
Rimor Horus 45	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	58,495
Etrusco CV600 BB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	51,000

FRONT DINETTE, LONGITUDINAL BUNKS						
WildAx Solaris XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	74,995

great for firm beds

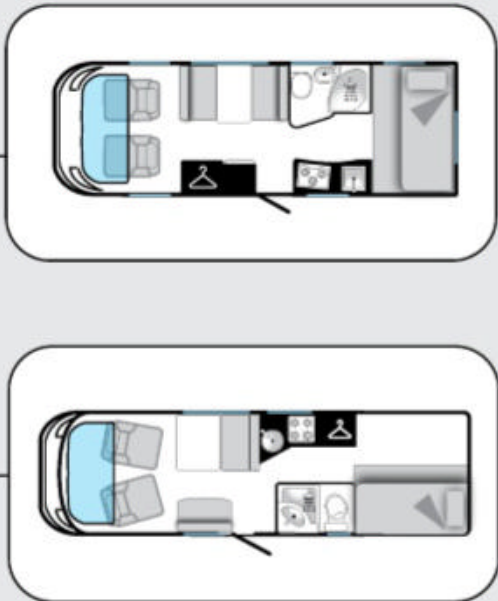
SWIFT CARRERA 144

(p96)



Price From £67,995 OTR **Sleeps 3 Belts 4**
Base vehicle Fiat Ducato **Engine** 2.2-litre
140bhp Euro 6D final **Length/width/height**
5.99/2.26/2.72m (19'8"/7'5"/8'11") **MTPLM**
3500kg **Payload** 537kg **Water** (fresh) 100 litres
Leisure battery 80Ah **Gas** 2 x 3.9kg

Do you often think beds that you put together with platforms feel a bit flimsy? Then you'll like the ones in Swift's brand-new van conversion range. They are a perfect compromise of slats and platforms – and very, very sturdy. You will sleep well.

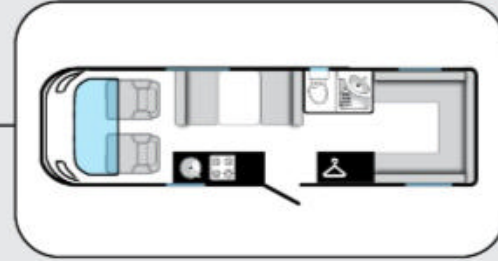
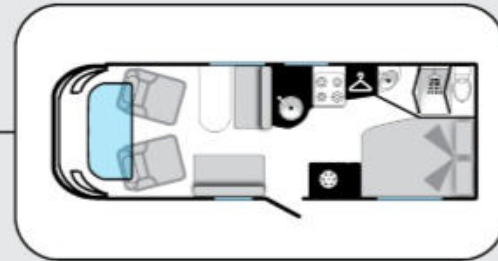
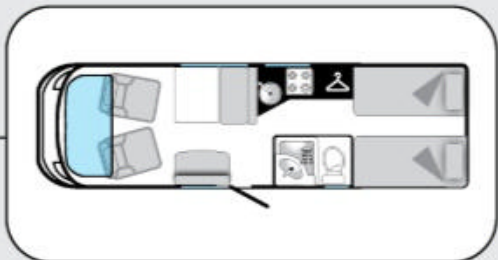


HIGH TOP, FIXED ROOF (CONT)

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (€)
FRONT DINETTE, FIXED SINGLE BEDS						
Globe-Traveller Voyager Z	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	90,595
Globe-Traveller Voyager Z	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	87,995
Globe-Traveller Pathfinder Z	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	83,595
Volkswagen Grand California 680	VW Crafter	3500	6.8	2	4	83,262
Globe-Traveller Pathfinder Z	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	81,595
Volkswagen Grand California 600	VW Crafter	3500	5.98	4	4	80,666
Knaus BoxLife 630 ME	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	78,310
Knaus BoxStar 630 Freeway	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	5	4	75,680
Swift Carrera 194	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	75,495
Globe-Traveller Explorer Z	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	70,995
Hobby Vantana K65ET De Luxe Black	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	74,595
Adria Twin Supreme 640 SLB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	74,345
Hobby Vantana K65ET De Luxe Expedition/	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	73,995
Hobby Vantana K65ET De Luxe White	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	73,595
Pilote Van 630J Vega XEdition	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	73,500
Knaus BoxStar 60 630 Freeway	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	5	4	72,270
Pilote Van 630J Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	71,000
Globe-Traveller Explorer Z	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	4	70,995
Globecar Campscout Elegance	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	2	4	69,995
Knaus BoxDrive 680ME	MAN	3500	6.84	3	4	69,083
Pilote Van 630J Vega Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	69,000
Pilote Van 600J Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	69,000
Pilote Van 600J Vega Standard	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	67,000
Weinsberg CaraBus 630 MEG [OUTLAW]	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	5	4	66,850
Hobby Vantana K65ET On Tour Edition Black	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	2	4	66,595
Knaus BoxStar 600 Family	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	66,250
Globecar Summit Shine 640	Citroën Relay	3300	6.36	2	3	65,995
Hobby Vantana K65ET On Tour Edition White	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	2	4	65,995
Knaus BoxStar 600 Lifetime	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	5	4	65,910
Globecar Summit Shine 600L	Citroën Relay	3300	5.99	2	3	63,995
Dreamer D68 Select Limited	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	3	4	63,800
Bürstner Eliseo C642	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	63,795
Sun Living V65XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	63,690
Joa Camp Van 63T	Citroën Relay	3500	6.36	2	4	60,600
Malibu Van first class – two rooms 640 LE RB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	60,410
Hymer Free 602	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	60,190
Rimor Horus 95	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	59,995
Malibu Van diversity 640 LE K	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	59,650
Malibu Van compact 600 LE	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,540
Malibu Van comfort 640 LE	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	58,660
Sunlight Cliff 640 Adventure Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	56,600
Globecar Summit Prime 640	Citroën Relay	3300	6.36	2	4	55,995
Carado CV640	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	55,390
Laika Kosmo Camper Van 6.4	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	4	54,140
Sunlight Cliff 640	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	52,300
Etrusco CV640 SB	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	51,900

FRONT DINETTE, FRENCH BED						
Globe-Traveller Voyager XS	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	89,995
Globe-Traveller Voyager X	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	88,595
Globe-Traveller Voyager X	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	86,995
Globe-Traveller Voyager XS	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	4	4	86,595
Globe-Traveller Pathfinder X	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	82,995
Globe-Traveller Pathfinder X	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	79,995
Auto-Sleeper Kingham	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	75,700
Globe-Traveller Explorer 2X	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	74,595
Globe-Traveller Explorer 2XS	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	73,995
Globe-Traveller Explorer 2X	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	72,595
Globe-Traveller Explorer 2XS	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	71,595
Swift Select 164	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	3	4	67,290
Dreamer D62 Select Limited	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	3	4	62,800

FRONT DINETTE, REAR LOUNGE						
RP Rebellion 4	Mercedes Sprinter	4050	6.96	4	4	156,995
RP Rebellion 2	Mercedes Sprinter	4050	6.96	2	2	153,995
RP Exclusive Explorer 4	Mercedes Sprinter	4050	6.96	4	4	125,995
RP Premium Explorer 4	Mercedes Sprinter	4050	6.96	4	4	105,995
WildAx Altair	MAN TGE	3500	6.84	3	4	92,995
Vantage Rio	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	79,950
East Neuk Fifer Touring L	Citroën Relay	3500	5.99	2	2	77,000
Benimar Benivan 122	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	76,995
Auto-Sleeper Fairford	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	75,700
Auto-Sleeper Fairford Plus	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	75,700
Auto-Sleeper Warwick XL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	75,700
Swift Carrera 184	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	75,495
WildAx Aurora Leisure XL	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	3	3	74,995
Auto-Trail V Line 636 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	74,138
East Neuk Fifer Touring M	Citroën Relay	3500	5.41	2	2	74,000
WildAx Aurora Leisure	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	3	73,995
Swift Carrera 144	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	73,495
Auto-Sleeper Warwick Duo	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.99	2	2	72,950
Moto-Trek Leisure-Treka ELD Elite	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	4	4	69,995
Auto-Trail V Line 636 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	69,182
Dreamer Select Living Van	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	67,900
Swift Select 184	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	67,290
Swift Select 144	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	3	4	65,290
Auto Haus Camelot Grandi X	VW Crafter	3500	5.99	4	4	64,999
Auto Haus Kingston	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	64,995
Auto-Trail V Line 680 S	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	61,250
Laika Ecovip Camper Van 645	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	4	61,155
Roller Team Toleno S	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	60,624
Auto-Trail V Line 670 S	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	59,798



how to buy...

Choosing a layout

People’s needs from their vehicle will differ, and your layout choice will depend very much on your touring companions and how you are planning to use your motorhome.

To understand which types of ’van layout are available, it’s a good idea to try, if you possibly can, to spend a day at one of the big shows, where manufacturers and dealerships will be displaying their latest models.

A dealership is also a good place to start your research, but do bear in mind that they may be affiliated with a limited number of brands. Having an informal chat with a dealer, though, could highlight concerns or offer some ideas that you haven’t yet considered.

Think about your touring requirements: will you want to carry bikes, sports kit, barbecues or outdoor lounging furniture? Perhaps your plan is to tow a small car?

If creature comforts are higher on your list, you might want a floorplan offering a separate sleeping area, a lounge with parallel sofas and TV points, and an oven.

If you plan to tour regularly in Europe, your preference might be for a smaller motorhome fitted with less kitchen equipment, but with an external barbecue point, an exterior mains socket and an awning.

Is the washroom going to be important to you, or will campsite facilities suffice? There’s a lot to think about.

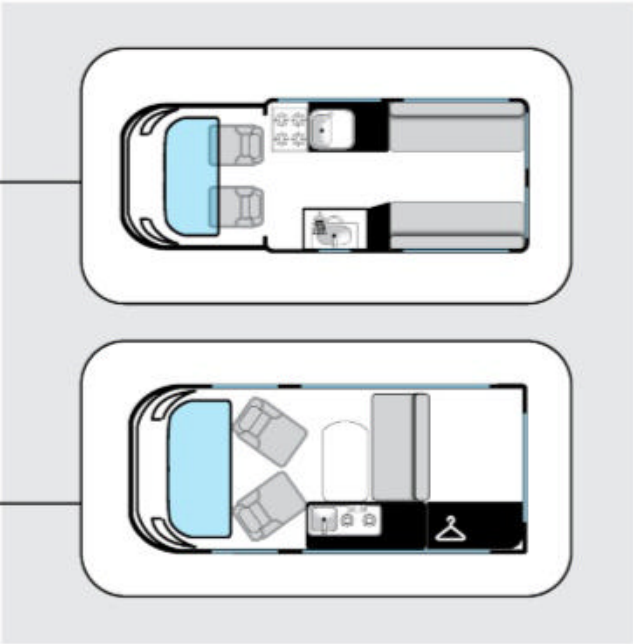
Hire a ’van before you buy: it’s a good way to bring focus to what you need and what you don’t.

how to buy...

Head back to the major shows

After the pandemic, some of us have forgotten what it was like to turn up to one of the major motorhome shows. We’ve been whiling away the time looking online.

But it’s great to see the shows coming back. They are a good way to see a ’van in reality, and you get a much better idea of what is and isn’t included in the price than you would by looking at a website. You could also bag a bargain!



great for details

GLOBE-TRAVELLER VOYAGER Z (p96)



Price £90,595 **Sleeps** 4 **Belts** 4
Base vehicle Fiat Ducato **Engine** 2.2-litre 180bhp **Length/width/height** 6.36/2.05/3.00m (20’10’’/6’9’’/9’10’’) **MTPLM** 3500kg
Payload 450kg **Water** (fresh/waste) 100/85 litres
Leisure battery 120Ah **Gas** TBC

When reviewing campervans, it’s not often that we spend our time admiring the woodgrain on the overhead lockers, but that is what we did on this new import from Poland. The grain actually matches from locker to locker!

Nor is that the only clever sign of attention to detail here. You also get drinks holders for those sitting in the back; so no more spilled drinks thanks to sudden jolts in the road. And a double bed for the kids drops down from over the cab.

If the price seems steep, this ’van is also available, for £2600 less, on a Peugeot Boxer.

Auto-Trail V Line 669 S	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	59,798
Auto-Trail Expedition 67	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	50,336

REAR LOUNGE ONLY						
RP Exclusive Explorer 2	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	6.96	2	2	120,495
RP AWD Exclusive Rebel	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	2	2	103,495
RP Exclusive Rebel	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	2	2	108,995
RP Premium Explorer 2	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	6.96	2	2	100,495
RP Premium Rebel	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	2	2	88,495
Devon Sapphire	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	6.94	3	3	76,800
Vantage Eos	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	75,950
Vantage Neo	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	75,950
WildAx Europa	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.26	2	2	74,995
Auto-Trail V Line 635 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	74,138
Benimar Benivan 120	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	73,995
S&L Apollo	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	73,950
Vantage Max	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	72,950
Vantage Sol	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	72,950
Swift Carrera 132	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	72,495
Pilote Van 630LG Vega Premium	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	72,000
Auto-Trail V Line 610 Sport	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	71,792
Swift Carrera 122	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	71,495
Hillside Hopton	VW Crafter	3500	5.98	2	2	70,695
Moto-Trek Leisure-Treka RL	Peugeot Boxer	3500	6.36	2	2	69,995
Vantage Cub	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	69,950
Vantage Med	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	69,950
S&L Atlas	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	69,850
Auto-Trail V Line 635 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	69,182
S&L Orion	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	67,000
Auto-Trail V Line 610 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	66,920
Auto-Trail V Line 540 SE	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	2	2	64,862
Swift Select 122	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	63,190
Rimor Horus 66	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	2	2	59,995
Roller Team Toleno L	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	58,216
Auto-Trail V Line 660 S	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	58,712
Auto-Trail Expedition 66	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	2	49,010

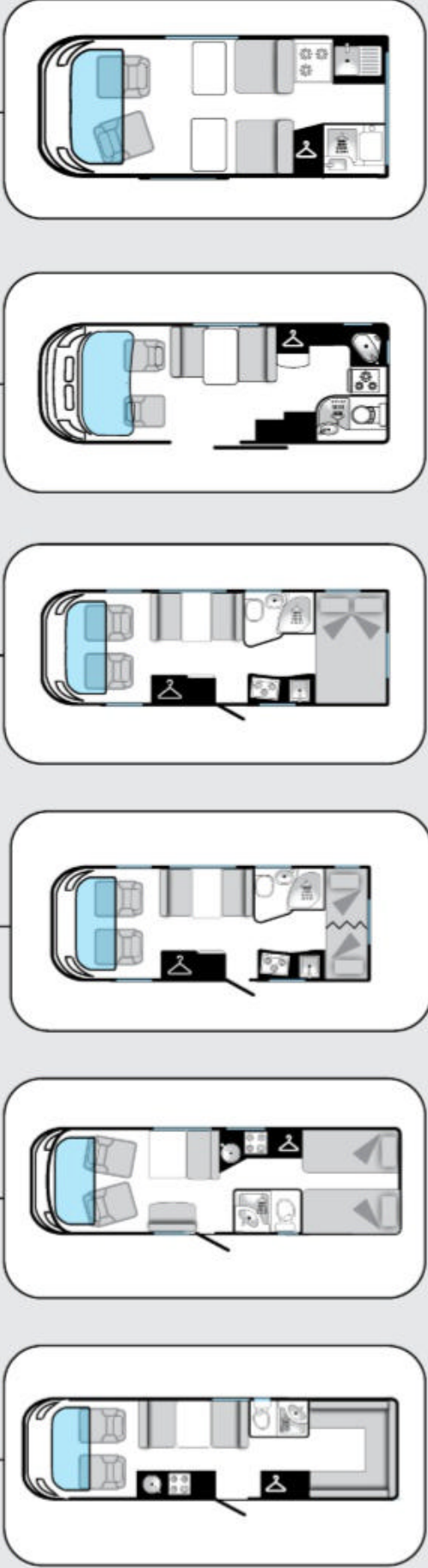
RAISING ROOF

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (£)
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REAR BENCH SEAT, NO WASHROOM						
Mercedes Marco Polo	Mercedes V-Class	3100	5.14	4	4	82,090
Jobl Kampa AT	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	74,950
Volkswagen California Ocean	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	72,980
Jobl Kampa GT	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	68,950
Hillside Birchover All-Motion	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	68,695
Swift Monza	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	67,940
Auto-Sleeper Air	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	66,995
CMC Reimo Trio High Style Comfort Range	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	66,250
Ford Landseer LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	5	65,595
Hembil Drift	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	65,500
Hembil Drift Comfort Range	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	65,000
Vantage Luna	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	64,950
Wellhouse Leisure Misano 4.1 LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	5	64,890
CMC Reimo City Van Comfort Range	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	64,500
Hembil Escape SL	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	64,500
Hembil Escape/Escape SL Comfort Range	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	2	4	63,750
Hembil Urban/Urban S Comfort Range	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	63,500
Hillside Birchover Executive	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	63,295
Wellhouse Leisure Misano 4.1 SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	63,250
Hembil Urban S	Ford Transit Custom	3300	4.97	4	5	63,000
Jobl Kampa SE L	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	62,950
Hembil Dune Comfort Range	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	62,750
Ford Landseer SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	62,595
Hillside Birchover Classic LWB	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	62,240
WildAx Proteus	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	61,995
Rolling Homes Columbus S	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	61,895
Volkswagen California Beach Tour	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	61,241
Rolling Homes Columbus	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	60,695
Volkswagen California Beach Camper	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	60,398
Jobl Kampa SE	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	59,950
Vantage Fuze	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	59,950
Hillside Birchover Classic	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	59,945
Rolling Homes Expedition	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	58,495
Jerba Cromarty	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	57,695
Rolling Homes Shackleton	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	57,695
Auto Campers Leisure Van Pop Top	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	57,200
Auto Campers mRv Pop Top	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	57,200
CMC Reimo Trio High Style Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	56,750
Wellhouse Leisure Misano Weekender LWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	5	56,390
Jerba Tiree	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	55,995
Hembil Drift Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	55,750
Bilbo’s Komba SL	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	55,500
CMC Reimo City Van Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	55,000
Wellhouse Leisure Matino 3	Toyota Proace		4.95	4	4	55,000
Hembil Escape/Escape SL Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	2	4	54,500
Hembil Urban/Urban S Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	54,250
Jans Lifestyle Bespoke	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	54,000
Bilbo’s Celex SL	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	53,950
Hembil Dune Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	53,500
Auto Haus GT Spartan	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	53,400
Wellhouse Leisure Misano Weekender SWB	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	5	53,250
Hembil Drift	Renault Trafic	3500	4.99	4	5	53,000
Auto Haus Ashton	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	52,150
Auto Haus Spartan	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	5	52,150
Hembil Escape/Escape SL	Renault Trafic	3500	4.99	4	5	52,000

RAISING ROOF (CONTINUED)

MODEL	BASE VEHICLE	MAX WEIGHT (KG)	LENGTH (M)	BERTHS	TRAVEL SEATS (INC DRIVER)	PRICE OTR (£)
Hillside Birchover S	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	51,995
Hembil Urban S	Renault Trafic	3500	4.99	4	5	51,500
Auto Campers Day Van Pop Top	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	2	2-7	50,050
Auto Haus Ashton '94	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	48,900
Rolling Homes Weekender	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	46,200
TWIN SEATS, REAR WASHROOM/KITCHEN						
CMC Reimo Multi-Style Comfort Range	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	66,250
Hillside Cromford	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	64,095
Jobl Kampa LE	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	63,950
Rolling Homes Livingstone	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	63,695
Jerba Sanna	VW T6.1	3200	5.29	4	4	58,895
CMC Reimo Multi-Style Smart Line	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	58,250
Jerba Taransay	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	57,695
Auto Haus Camelot	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	55,600
Bilbo's Nexa SL	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	53,950
Greenline RG540	Renault Trafic	3500	5.48	4	4	51,950
Greenline RG500	Renault Trafic	3500	5.08	4	4	49,950
Bilbo's Space SL	VW T6.1	3200	4.89	4	4	49,500
FRONT DINETTE, CORNER KITCHEN						
Ford Nugget Plus	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	4	79,617
Ford Nugget	Ford Transit Custom	3190	4.97	4	4	74,757
WildAx Triton	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	4	66,995
Wheelhome Vikenze-III-e	Vauxhall Combo-e		4.4	1	2	62,535
Dreamer Cap Land Select	Ford Transit Custom	3190	5.34	4	4	52,700
FRONT DINETTE, TRANSVERSE BED						
Adria Twin Sports 640 SGX	Fiat Ducato	4250	6.36	4	4	85,800
Hymer Free S Blue Evolution	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	4	4	81,940
Adria Twin Sports 600 SX	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	78,030
Adria Twin Sports 600 SPB	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	77,800
Hymer Grand Canyon S	Mercedes Sprinter	3500	5.93	4	4	76,970
Hymer Free 600 Campus	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	2	4	73,950
Hymer Free 540 Blue Evolution	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	4	4	73,340
Hymer Grand Canyon	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	67,750
Hymer Ayers Rock	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	4	4	66,460
Sunlight Cliff 540 RT Adventure Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.41	4	4	61,700
Sunlight Cliff 600 RT Adventure Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	58,900
FRONT DINETTE, TRANSVERSE BUNKS						
Dreamer D55 Fun UP	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.41	4	4	61,700
Dreamer D43 Fun UP	Peugeot Boxer	3500	5.41	4	4	59,100
FRONT DINETTE, FIXED SINGLE BEDS						
Adria Twin Sports 640 SLB	Fiat Ducato	4250	6.36	4	4	84,495
Adria Twin Sports 640 SG	Fiat Ducato	4250	6.36	4	4	83,815
Hymer Yellowstone	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	68,530
Hymer Yosemite	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	67,750
Sunlight Cliff 640 RT Adventure Edition	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	60,900
FRONT DINETTE, REAR LOUNGE						
Auto-Trail Adventure 65	Fiat Ducato	3500	6.36	4	4	74,966
Auto-Trail Adventure 55	Fiat Ducato	3500	5.99	4	4	73,286





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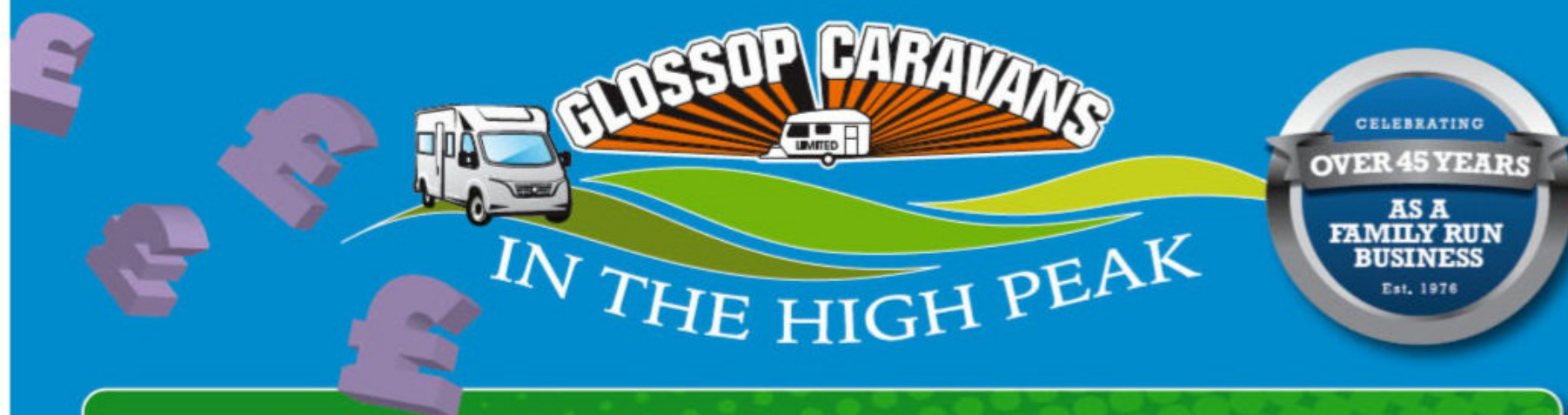

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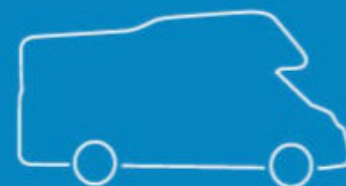
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BLAST FROM THE PAST!

Join us as we take a look back at vintage issues of *Practical Motorhome*

JULY 2012

With a family of happy cyclists pictured in front a Bailey Approach, this summer issue promised lots of adventure, with tours to Cambridge and the Pyrenees



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Our live-in test reviewers enjoyed assessing the Auto-Trail Tracker RS. This compact coachbuilt with rear washroom was found to have excellent features and strong design (right). Meantime, Ed Evans shared top tips for maintaining your 'van's exhaust system (below)



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